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CYBORG COMEBACK

WHY THE TIMELINE
HAD TO CHANGE

HOW CAMERON KEPT
GENISYS ON TRACK

SET VISIT THE NEXT UTOPIA?

Behind the scenes for
Channel 4's Humans

SEND IN THE CLONES ORPHAN BLACK

First word on Season 3

ALSO INSIDE

BATMAN V SUPERMAN
CHILDREN OF THE STONES
ROCKY HORROR
MINIONS
SHANNARA
SENSE8

†
X-RATED EXPOSÉ
PREACHER

Everything you need to
know about DC's taboo-
busting TV show

STAR WARS SPECIAL VADER LIVES!

How Dark Horse Comics rewrote the canon



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ISSUE 107

NEW MUTANTS X-MEN: APOCALYPSE

All-new deets from Singer's
threequel prequel

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Why Marvel's smallest
superhero is its biggest risk



STRETCH

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GET EXCITED ABOUT THE LOBSTER

Having already received a great reception at this year's Cannes Film Festival, Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos looks set to confound a wider audience than he did with the massively acclaimed likes of *Dogtooth* and *Alps*. Set in a dystopian future where finding a lover literally becomes a matter of life or death, it could finally mark his entry into the mainstream, featuring an all-star cast encompassing the likes of Colin Farrell, Olivia Colman and John C Reilly. If it's anything like his previous efforts, prepare for an unforgettable experience.



He said he'd be back.

Arnie lends himself to a punchline, but it's easy to forget just how groundbreaking *The Terminator* was back in 1984.

Ostensibly an explosive action-thriller, its themes of AI and the peril of playing God were so underlying as to barely intrude – a lesson certain sledgehammer-heavy action flicks could do well to learn. Seven years later, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* raised the bar even higher, which made the series' subsequent sub-par sequels all the more sad.

With *Terminator Genisys*, however, we hope that the lessons of the past have been learned – and judging by our interviews with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Emilia Clarke, Alan Taylor, Jai Courtney and Jason Clarke, we can look to the future with a little more confidence in this regard.

And that's not all. Also inside, we report from the sets of *Sense8* and *Humans*, two very different shows that could well stand to make a huge impact. Corey Stoll talks exclusively about his role as *Ant-Man*'s big bad Darren Cross, and new man-clone Ari

Millen tells us what to expect from Season Three of *Orphan Black*.

On a separate note, you will not fail to notice that our reviewing system has changed. Coinciding with the release with the excellent free iPhone app, Just A Score, we will now be rating films, TV shows, books and comics out of ten. Other than that, it's business as usual – if you disagree, download the app and get involved!

Steve
Steve Wright
Deputy Editor

CONTENTS

EVERY ISSUE

06 PORTAL

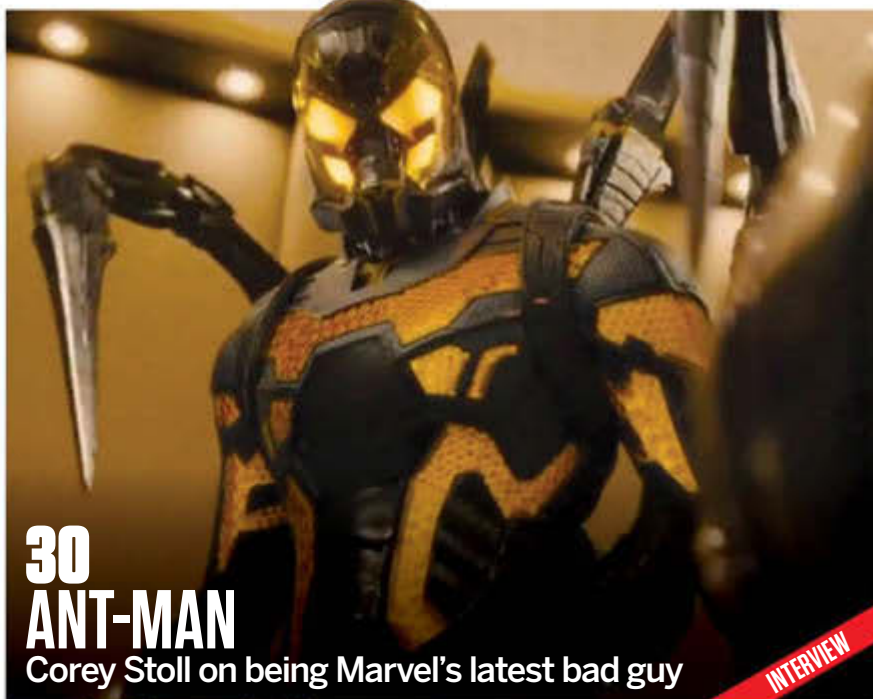
What's happening in the world of sci-fi

80 SUBSCRIPTIONS

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130 NEXT ISSUE

Your first look at the next issue of SciFiNow



30 ANT-MAN

Corey Stoll on being Marvel's latest bad guy

INTERVIEW



116 ROCKY HORROR

The story of the hit musical

RETRO CLASSIC



52 SENSE8

Wachowskis and Netflix unite



38 ORPHAN BLACK

Clone alone



50 SONG OF THE SEA



06 SUICIDE SQUAD

Judging the Joker



46 HUMANS

Channel 4's next big hit?



120 UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

PORTAL

06 Suicide Squad

The first look at DC's biggest antiheroes, and the reaction to Jared Leto's Joker.

08 Brandon Routh

The Superman Returns star on featuring in *Arrow* and *The Flash* as Ray Palmer, aka The Atom.

10 Minions

Director and star Pierre Coffin gives the lowdown on the eagerly awaited *Despicable Me* spinoff.

14 The Shannara Chronicles

Terry Brooks tells us what to expect from MTV's adaptation of his epic fantasy series.

FEATURES

18 Terminator Genisys

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Emilia Clarke and more on coming back to save sci-fi

30 Ant-Man

Corey Stoll talks to us about becoming Yellowjacket.

34 Reservoir Capes

Spider-Man, Deadpool, Robin and more team up to pull off the heist of the century.

38 Orphan Black

New male clone Ari Millen reveals all on Season 3.

42 Dark Matter

We journey to the set of the latest sci-fi drama from the makers of *Stargate*.

46 Humans

Behind the scenes of Channel 4's robo-drama TV series on the morality behind AI.

50 Song Of The Sea

Director Tomm Moore on how he drew on mythology for his Oscar-nominated animation.

52 Sense8

The stars of Netflix's game changer on what to expect live from the Iceland set.

56 Insidious: Chapter 3

Writer/director Leigh Whannell breaks down the chilling third film.

58 Feeding Hannibal

Designer Janice Poon talks us through *Hannibal*'s meal-time scenes.

REVIEWS

66 Mad Max: Fury Road

Our verdict on Max Rockatansky's explosive return to the Outback.

67 The Age Of Adaline

Blake Lively lives a lot of lifetimes in this fantasy romance.

67 Freaks

We revisit Tod Browning's 1932 horror classic.

68 Moomins On The Riviera

The Finnish children's favourites hit the big screen for the first time.

68 The Incident

Twilight Zone meets *Blair Witch* in this chilling horror.



18 TERMINATOR GENISYS

The cast and crew reveal all about the brave new direction of the series

COVER FEATURE

69 Tomorrowland: A World Beyond

Find out what we thought of Disney's ode to nostalgia and the imagination.

74 Burying The Ex

Joe Dante returns to comedy-horror in his latest feature.

76 12 Monkeys

Does Syfy's reimagining live up to Terry Gilliam's sci-fi classic?

76 Supernatural

The latest from the crazy adventures of Sam and Dean.

77 Once Upon A Time

Find out if the latest series of the fantasy favourite justifies the hype.

BOOK CLUB

84 Essential Read: From Hell

How Alan Moore created the definitive Jack the Ripper tale.

88 Beginner's Guide: Charlaïne Harris

Discover more about the Sookie Stackhouse author.

90 Seveneves

Can Neal Stephenson's latest novel match up to his past works?

96 Dune: Folio Society

Behind the scenes of this loving ode to Frank Herbert's classic.

102 Paul Levitz

How the former DC head helped turned the company into the powerhouse it is today.

TIMEWARP

108 Star Wars: Dark Horse Comics

The story of the forgotten *Star Wars* comics era.

116 The Rocky Horror Picture Show

Do the time warp with the classic horror musical.

120 Universal Soldier

Dolph Lundgren relives his action experiences.

122 Children Of The Stones

We go back to the Seventies with the cast of this eerie TV series.



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MEET THE TEAM

Q. Who is your favourite movie robot companion?



James Hoare
Editor in Chief

A. BOB
The little dented one in *The Black Hole*. Poor bastard.



Steve Wright
Deputy Editor

A. R2-D2
The ultimate survivor – stick with him and you'll be alright.



Jonathan Hatfull
Features Editor

A. Kay-Em
She finally killed Jason. *Jason X* is a masterpiece.



Poppy-Jay Palmer
Senior Staff Writer

A. Marvin the Paranoid Android
He's a buzzkill, but great for a one-liner.



Marcus Faint
Art Editor

A. GERTY
I'd love a Kevin Spacey-voiced emoji to take care of me and my clones.

PORTAL

Your essential, trustworthy and unrivalled guide to the latest genre happenings



15 REASONS TO GET EXCITED ABOUT THE DC CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

Get to grips with the best of what Warner Bros has in store for DC...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

1 The *Suicide Squad* cast photo: You'd be hard pressed to find someone who wasn't at least a little impressed with the first proper look at DC's foremost antiheroes. The grungy, ripped and tattooed team is ticking all our boxes.

2 *Dawn Of Justice*'s first trailer: False Gods! Bat plane! Controversy! Glowing eyes inside the Bat-mask! The first full trailer for *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* – all 134 glorious seconds of it – was far from a yawn fest, but it was unfortunately rather overshadowed by the surprise *The Force Awakens* teaser that materialised the day before.

The *Dawn Of Justice* trailer promised a very different Superman movie.



3 The new Batsuit: We more or less know what it looks like, but what can it *do*? All the pics and footage of Ben Affleck as the Caped Crusader have been a bit dark and blurry so far. Can anyone prove that the prestigious Bat-nipples from *Batman & Robin* aren't back?



4 *Batfleck*: Ben Affleck may have made some bad film choices before (cough, *Daredevil*, cough), but more recently he attracted praise for his work on box office hits like *Argo* and *Gone Girl*. His take on Bruce Wayne might just blow our minds.

009 PREACHER



Everything we know so far about Seth Rogen's adaptation

012 X-MEN: APOCALYPSE



Take a look at the new Jean Grey, Jubilee and more

012 SUPERMAN LIVES



Director Jon Schnepf discusses his 'what if' film on the failed movie



The Suicide Squad line-up from left to right: Slipknot, Captain Boomerang, Enchantress, Katana, Rick Flagg, Harley Quinn, Deadshot, Killer Croc, El Diablo.

5 Killer Croc: He's a cross between a human and a crocodile! And he's played by Mr Eko from *Lost*. What's not to love? As he's born with his condition as opposed to inflicting it on himself, he ought to be more interesting than Dr Connors' Lizard in *The Amazing Spider-Man*.

6 Jesse Eisenberg as Lex Luthor: The photo of Eisenberg with a big, bald head has been the source of both excitement and ridicule, but either way it will definitely be intriguing to see how he approaches the Man of Steel's arch-enemy.

7 Bruce vs Clark burn-off: Bruce Wayne threw some serious shade in the trailer. *Dawn Of Justice* could be a full-on mean quip party. "Tell me, do you bleed?" says Batman. "The Nineties called, they wants their Bat-nipples back," says Superman. A slap fight ensues for three films.

8 Patty Jenkins directing *Wonder Woman*: The search for a director has been an up-and-down saga. But after Michelle MacLaren dropped out, the *Monster* director quickly stepped up. There's a lot riding on the film, but we reckon Jenkins will wow.

9 Cyborg: When Ray Fisher was cast as Victor Stone, everyone was like, 'who?' He's a stage actor, and this will be his first film. We're also like 'woo!' because he's getting his own movie in 2020.

10 The Justice League: *Justice League* is coming in two parts (set for 2017 and 2019). The line-up is pretty great – Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Cyborg – but whether it matches up to the *Avengers* films remains to be seen.

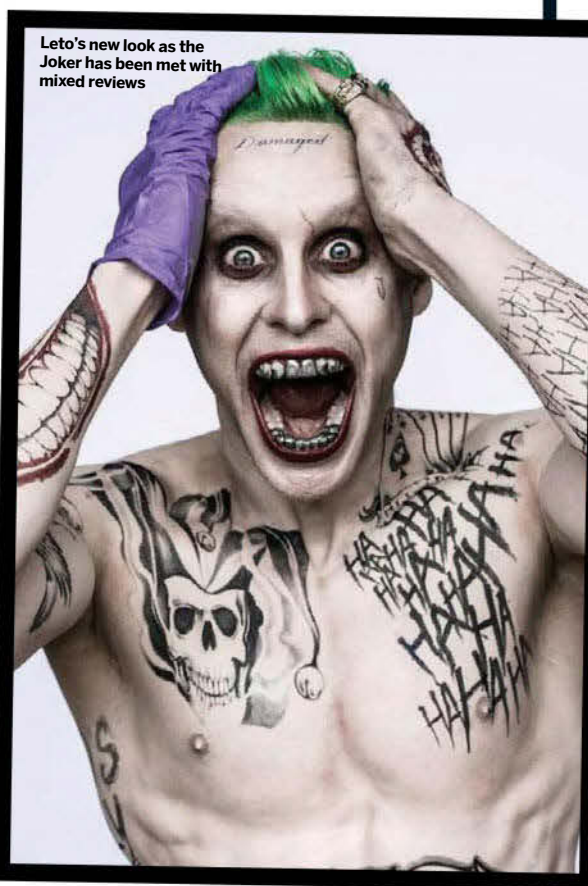
11 Wonder Woman's super-suit: Various concept sketches have recently appeared online suggesting that her costume has had a bit of a revamp since the release of Gal Gadot's first photo shoot. A cape is looking more and more likely.

12 Aquaman: If anyone can turn Arthur Curry into a superhero from the fish-whispering lame-ass from the comics, it's Jason Momoa. His Dothraki-style costume and ferocious eyebrows will give Aquaman the cool points he desperately needs.

13 Tom Hardy approves: It was a blow when the original choice for Rick Flagg had to drop out, but the fact that he told *Collider* that the script is 'really fucking alley' (which means good, apparently) is reassuring.

14 Harley Quinn: They have ditched the court jester look, but the reimagining isn't half bad. Margot Robbie's look of glee is enough to make us feel confident that she's going to be amazing.

Leto's new look as the Joker has been met with mixed reviews



15 Jared Leto's Joker pic: The general consensus is that Leto's make-up and green hair aren't a patch on Heath Ledger's. But it's interesting that *Suicide Squad* seems to be going in a completely different direction with their Joker.

Just how
geeky are our
favourite sci-fi stars?

GEEK-O-METER

“**SUPERMAN RETURNS
WAS REALLY THE FILM
THAT UNLOCKED THE
DOOR FOR ME**”

BRANDON ROUTH

85

TOTAL GEEK
RATING

GEEK CRED

⚙️ You can't just play Superman; you stay Superman forever. Brandon Routh was given this chance of a lifetime a decade ago. "I thought I'd take it in my stride, but I was only 25, and there was so much I didn't know about the world and filmmaking. It's hard to believe it has been ten years since we made *Superman Returns*. I think that now... I'd be able to give so much more to that role. But I can do that now with Ray Palmer!" he says of his current role in *Arrow*.

17/20

GEEK KNOWLEDGE

⚙️ Born in a small town in Iowa and pursuing his dreams in LA, Routh's life seems to mirror Clark Kent. Routh says that as a teenager, he "always had an affinity to the science fiction/fantasy world. I grew up being a big fan of the *Superman* movies." His love of pop culture would later lead to him exploring new paths.. "I had to do lots of research for *Dylan Dog*. I read as much as I could, all the books that have been translated into English to get the feel of character."

19/20

COMMITMENT

⚙️ When asked if he feels typecast into comic-book adaptations, he says, "I got to play really cool characters, so you can call it whatever you want, but I still enjoy it." He describes Ray Palmer, aka The Atom, as "a guy who's excited about life, science, technology and saving people; he is a little bit goofy." But he doesn't limit himself; of *Dylan Dog* and *Scott Pilgrim* he says, "We travelled not only through the comic-book genre, but also fantasy, sci-fi, horror and thriller."

18/20

COSPLAY CULT

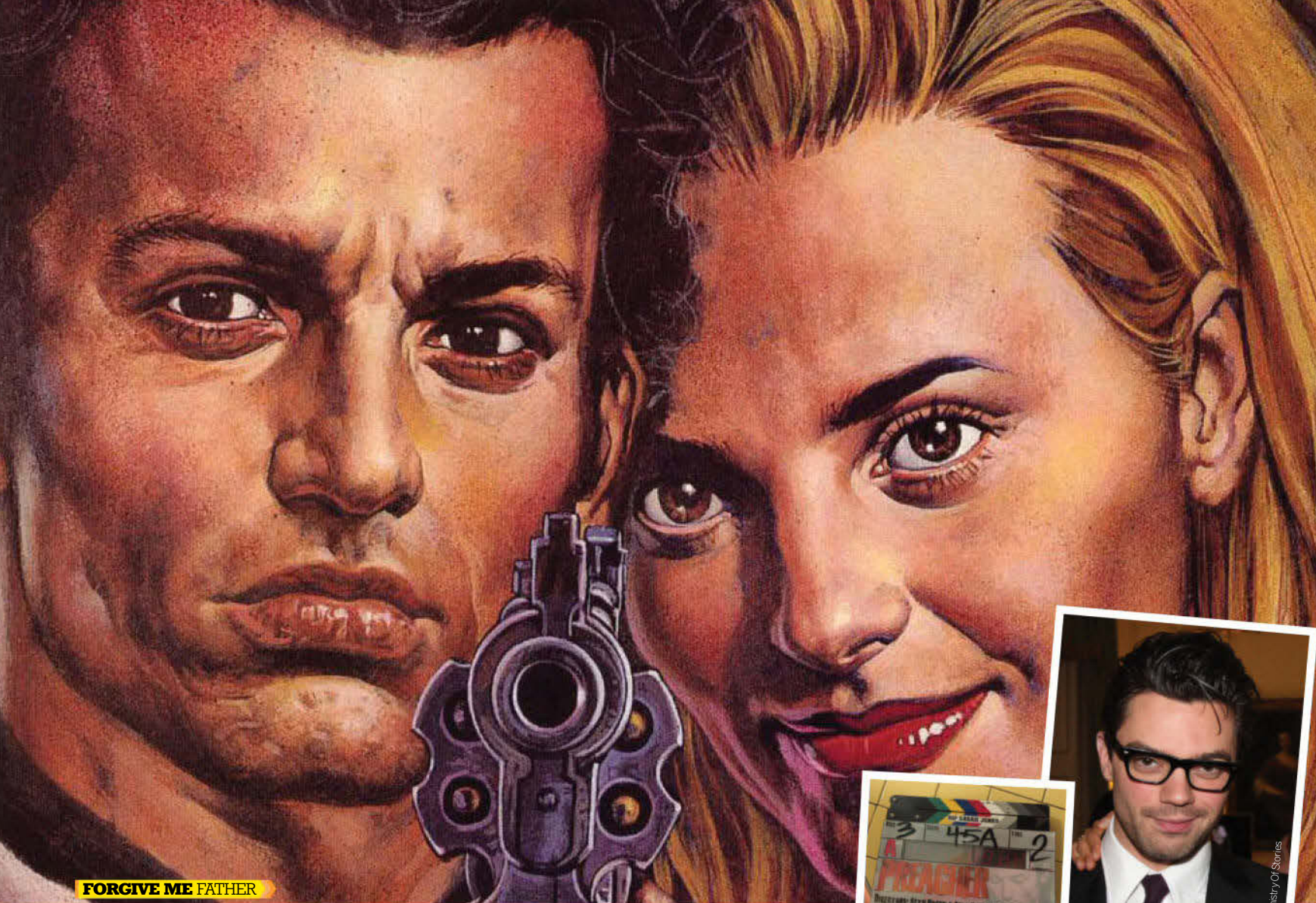
⚙️ It is impossible to not find a single iconic 'S' on someone's chest at any convention. But for Routh, his own career may seem like a cosplaying challenge. "It was pretty cool to wear another costume, like the Atom suit, after all these years," he admits. "It feels bizarre, as it's been ten years since *Superman Returns*. And the Atom suit is really different than the Superman costume. I'm excited that people are actually getting to see it. It looks amazing on camera."

15/20

FAN POWER

⚙️ Routh has always enjoyed huge geek credibility because of his devotion to the comic-book genre. In the years following his debut, his fanbase bloated as he immersed himself in the world of spandex, fancy masks and weird nicknames. "*Superman Returns* introduced me to the comic-book genre, and I think it was really that film that unlocked the door for me to continue playing more characters and be involved in more film and television projects in that genre."

16/20



FORGIVE ME FATHER

GONE TO TEXAS

Who's who in Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg's *Preacher* TV series

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

Preacher feels like a comic that couldn't ever be filmed. You just wouldn't be able to find the people – or the studio or network – to translate Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's brilliant, profane and downright diabolical series to life without watering it down or fundamentally changing it.

Enter Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, who brought you *Pineapple Express* and *This Is The End*. Anyone who witnessed the apocalyptic filth of the latter could tell you that these guys have read *Preacher*. As for the network, where better than AMC? They're still riding a wave of critical acclaim for *Breaking Bad* and *Mad Man*, and are obviously not afraid of shocking their audience, as evidenced by *The Walking Dead*.

With casting for the pilot episode complete, let's break down who's who in the world of *Preacher*...

DOMINIC COOPER IS JESSE CUSTER

The Reverend Jesse Custer has a complicated relationship with God.

Almost as complicated as his family. When Jesse is struck by the power of Genesis, the product of a demon and angel's union, he gains the power to make anyone do what he says, and decides to use this ability to find God. He'll be played by Dominic Cooper, who deserves a better showcase than the middling villain roles he's played in *Dracula Untold* and *Need For Speed*.



RUTH NEGGA IS TULIP O'HARE

Tulip is loyal, headstrong, and a hell of a shot. She's also the love of Jesse's life, but she's certainly not just a love interest. She's smart and has no time for bullshit, and we're very excited that the *Agents Of SHIELD* star has signed on. She's shown a great ability for scene stealing in shows like *Misfits*, and it's about time she had an awesome leading role.

JOSEPH GILGUN IS CASSIDY

A drunken, well-intentioned disaster zone? Joe Gilgun's already got that down



after playing Rudy for three years on *Misfits*. We're also willing to trust that he can do a decent Irish accent after putting on a strong Glaswegian one in *Lockout*.

Cassidy is a motor-mouthed vampire who's been around for centuries, and is a loyal friend. There's just a good chance that he might get you killed by accident.



ELIZABETH PERKINS IS VYLA QUINCANNON

This one's a bit of a puzzler. We're big fans of Perkins, who expertly veered between odious and sympathetic as Celia Hodes in *Weeds*. However, the character seems to combine characteristics of the literally meat-loving slaughterhouse king Odin Quincannon and Jesse's monstrous grandmother Marie L'Angell. Marie is a withered, hateful, bigoted old crone who, together with her henchmen, makes life hell for Jesse. Vyla is described as a

businesswoman who runs the Annville slaughterhouse. Oh, and she's terrifying.

W EARL BROWN IS SHERIFF HUGO ROOT

The *Deadwood* veteran takes the role of Annville's tough-as-nails sheriff who's a believer in aliens and tough justice. The character is decidedly unlikeable in the comics (bigotry is a common trait there), but the show's version sounds like he might be a little softer. Not much, though.



IAN COLLETTI IS ARSEFACE

It wouldn't be *Preacher* without Arseface. The teenager who attempts to blow his head off to emulate Kurt Cobain will be played by young Ian Colletti. He is also Sheriff Root's son, and he's devoted to his dad. The feeling is hardly mutual, as Hugo refuses to acknowledge the boy's existence.

AMC's *Preacher* is set for broadcast in 2016. Download the comics from Comixology now.



©MinistryOfStories



MINION MADNESS

The *Despicable Me* prequel directors on the original adventures of Stuart, Kevin and Bob

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER



Since the Minions made their debut as, well, minions to supervillain Gru in *Despicable Me*, they have taken the world by storm. They are everywhere: on phone cases, birthday cakes, t-shirts, backpacks – you name it. This summer, they're back, this time with their own movie. Directors Kyle Balda and Pierre Coffin talk to us about *Minions* and life before Gru.

"Basically, we learn that their main purpose is to serve a villain master, and that without being fulfilled they are kind of lost," Kyle Balda tells us. "They go through a succession of failing their master and getting fired or, in some cases, killing them. Then eventually this one Minion steps up, Kevin, and he says that he's going to go out and find the perfect villain to serve, and he recruits Stuart and Bob. The

three of them leave and branch out from the tribe, and they go out into the world.

"They end up haphazardly working for Scarlet Overkill, who is the greatest villain of her era, and then it's more about what ensues from that. The basic premise is about the Minions and their need for servitude, and also how they always fail up, as we like to put it. They are constantly screwing up, but somehow in a graceful way that puts them in a better position."

"They are all their own characters," says Pierre Coffin. "Kevin is the bossy conscience of the group, Stuart is the teenager who doesn't want to do this thing, who's bored, but who likes the attention – he's a great ukulele player, and then there's Bob, who is really innocent and naïve and wants to go into that adventure,

and doesn't really know what he's getting into."

Overkill (voiced by Sandra Bullock), is a tour de force in the villain universe. In *Minions*, villains have their own parallel world, and Scarlet is at the top of it, running the show. "The first time we pitched it to Sandy, we knew we wanted a villain in there," says Coffin. "We wanted to create a surprise. [In that era], the cliché was that the men are working and the women are staying at home, waiting for their men or taking care of the kids. So we said, 'Let's make it interesting and have our main villain, the one that the Minions are going to be searching for, let's have a woman [and make her] advanced for her time.' The Minions set out to find a villain, but they actually found a villainess. That's super cool. Also, in her relationship with her husband

we were trying to show that she's not only ahead of her time in the villain business, but also at home, where she's actually the one that's working, and it's her husband that is staying at home taking care of things."

As well as directing *Minions* and *Despicable Me 1-2*, Coffin is also the voice behind the titular sidekicks. "I had this idea of instead of using a majority of made-up words, I would steal words here and there from German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, all over. The way I mashed it together and the choices of the words [meant] we could get the meaning of what was happening and that became magical. It made sense when we got to the Minion movie: they had travelled and served masters all over the world, and so it made sense that their language is actually made up of

Co-director Pierre Coffin also provides the voices for the Minions.



I WOULD STEAL WORDS
HERE AND THERE FROM
GERMAN, ITALIAN,
CHINESE, JAPANESE
PIERRE COFFIN



The Minions' actions were inspired by Charlie Chaplin and Peter Sellers.

all the other languages. We turned out to be very intelligent without meaning to be."

After Coffin nailed the voices, the animators had to develop the Minions movement. Some animated movies use actors doing motion capture to record movements, but *Minions* was made completely by hand. However, Coffin and Balda did reference real people while directing the film.

"Pierre and I reference a lot Charlie Chaplin and Peter Sellers," says Balda. "For me, Peter Sellers is like a Charlie Chaplin who talks a little bit more, but mainly it's still very pantomime-heavy acting. Even though the Minions are speaking, they are not speaking a language anyone can understand. You can get something from the tone of the voice, but you can't

understand what they are thinking and feeling from what they say. So the tone helps, but mainly it's that corporal acting in the facial expressions. Peter Sellers and Charlie Chaplin are fantastic for those kinds of things."

Despicable Me has become a phenomenon since the first film's release in 2010. But at the time, Coffin wasn't convinced it was going to be successful. "I thought it was going to fail miserably, I'm sorry to say," he tells us. "And I said it for the second one, and it outdid the first one, and that's why I really don't know about this one. I wish I could say it was going to fail so it could prove me wrong a third time but I might jinx it."



Minions will be released in cinemas on 26 June in the UK.



LEARN TO SPEAK MINIONESE

Hello
Bello!

Goodbye
Poopyee!

Thanks
Tank yue!

What?
Po ka?

One, two, three
Hana! Dul! Sae!

I would like...
Babooa voodreey...

Where is the train station?
**Chicka dee chick,
chicka dee chick?**

Live long and prosper
Spockoo baa!

May the Force be with you
**Bee bappa chew
bacca!**

My dear fellow, you appear
to be on fire
**BEE DO BEE DO
BEE DO!**

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Set
phasers
to fun

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ONCE UPON
A TIME



MUTANT CHRONICLES

NEXT-MEN

Everything you need to know about *X-Men: Apocalypse*, *Mutants* and beyond... WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER



X-Men: Apocalypse is already well into production.

Director Bryan Singer's recent Instagram splurge has only served to make our excitement for *X-Men: Apocalypse* even more intense than before. There's already loads to get excited about: James McAvoy shaved his head, Lana Condor and Sophie Turner have gone all Eighties retro as Jubilee and Jean Grey, and the art for Angel (Ben Hardy)'s metal wings is just about the coolest thing. The cast has got a lot bigger, with news that *The Newsroom*'s Olivia Munn and *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*' Kodi Smit-McPhee signed up for psychic telekinetic Psylocke and teenage Nightcrawler respectively.

But there's more than just *Apocalypse* to tickle your mutant pickle. It's no secret that Fox has been looking at the MCU as something it would like to emulate, and spread the *X-Men* movie-verse. The first project has come in the form of a *New Mutants* spin-off

based on the Marvel comic of the same name that debuted in 1982.

It's early days, but *New Mutants* already has a director. *The Fault In Our Stars*' Josh Boone has signed up to direct and co-write with Knate Gwaltney (*Jackass 3D*). Producer Simon Kinberg said of the project in an interview with *Deadline*: "We're so excited to explore this new part of the *X-Men* universe, and so excited to do it with Josh, who is uniquely suited to tell this story about young characters."

New Mutants also puts the status of the other planned spin-off *X-Force* into question. *X-Force* has been Fox's new project for a while now, but who knows what's going on with that now? Perhaps the news of *New Mutants* deletes it from the studio's vision for a bigger, better *X-Men* movie-verse for good.

X-Men: Apocalypse will be released in cinemas on 19 May 2016.



UP, UP AND CRASH-LAND

THE DEATH OF SUPERMAN LIVES: WHAT HAPPENED?

The director and producer on the *Superman* movie that never was... WORDS STEVE WRIGHT

A *Superman* movie starring Nicolas Cage, directed by Tim Burton and written by Kevin Smith may sound like an outlandish proposition today in the age of grungy, serious DC movie adaptations, but once it was almost a reality. *Superman Lives* came within three weeks of being brought to life – a story that filmmaker Jon Schnepf tells in his documentary, *The Death Of Superman Lives: What Happened?*

"For several years, I'd been interested in the comic art online," says Schnepf regarding his choice of subject matter. "I was talking with friends, one said I should do a documentary, and another said I should do a Kickstarter doc."

The journey of the film proved to be a tough one, as it went through two separate crowd-funding campaigns and much time spent chasing up

interviewees. But the result was worth it, with many of the original talent being interviewed, like Smith ("so funny and true to his heart", says Schnepf), Burton ("funny, smart, quick-witted and self-deprecating") and Jon Peters ("a unique individual, but a very nice guy").

Producer Holly Payne is happy with the outcome: "I think the most satisfying things has been the reception from the people working on *Superman Lives* who came to our premiere, spoke to us after and said, 'You guys have done an amazing thing here.' So that's been the most valuable thing: hearing all these people who worked on it saying it's great."



The Death Of Superman Lives: What Happened? will be available on VOD from 9 July.



The Death Of Superman Lives: What Happened? looks at DC's forgotten film.





BEYOND THUNDERDOME

AND THE WINNER IS...

We unveil the *Fury Road* poster to be shown at MCM

To help celebrate the latest cinema release of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, we teamed up with Warner Bros. Pictures, MCM Comic Con and our sister publication, Photoshop Creative magazine, to challenge you to create an inspiring fan poster for the film – and the results are in!

Hand-picked by director George Miller himself, and chosen from over 50 entries, the winning poster was created by Adam Davison, and will be displayed at the UK's largest MCM Comic Con in London on 22-24 May 2015. Congratulations Adam!

While making his choice, Miller selected the artwork as the winning poster for being the most arresting and original – judging by the final result, we couldn't agree more.

We would like to thank everyone for submitting their creations. Head to bit.ly/1F3qJmD to see all the posters that were entered in the competition.

Mad Max: Fury Road is in cinemas now.



Adam Davison

The designer of the best poster talks us through his choice

"Inspiration for the design came from director George Miller describing the film as a 'western on wheels'. The final art developed from there. I wanted the image to resemble an old western movie poster and I had this idea of a car flying through the air, almost towards the viewer, trying to get away from the bad guys. It was a nice surprise to be chosen as the winner. Thanks goes to Photoshop Creative, Warner Bros Pictures and MCM Comic Con for the opportunity, and also George Miller for choosing my design."

NEAR A
DEEP, DARK
FOREST



THE MAGIC BEGINS

Terry Brooks has been happy to take a step back on MTV's adaptation of his long-running *Shannara* series.



THE WRITERS
HAVE BEEN
ABSOLUTELY
TERRIFIC
TERRY BROOKS

SHANNARA BEGINS

Author Terry Brooks gives his thoughts on the TV adaptation of his bestselling fantasy series WORDS EDWARD GROSS

The *Shannara Chronicles* is the TV version of author Terry Brooks' long-running – 38 years, over 25 volumes – book series that launched with 1977's *The Sword Of Shannara*. Set thousands of years in the future following an apocalyptic event, the series chronicles generational tales that blend magic and primitive technology and involves characters typically found in fantasy, among them elves, Druids and demons.

The show is produced by Dan Farah (*Alter Egos*) and Jon Favreau (*Iron Man*), with Al Gough and Miles Millar (*Smallville*) as showrunners and Brooks himself serving as an executive producer. It stars Ivana Baquero as

Eretria, Austin Butler as Wil Ohmsford, Poppy Drayton as Amberle Ellessedil and *Lord Of The Rings* star John Rhys-Davies as Eventine Ellessedil. The show's first season – a debut date for which has not yet been announced – is based on the second book in the series, *The Elfstones Of Shannara*.

"For *Elfstones*," Brooks explains, "I came up with a story that had to do with the fact that the elves were dealing with a barrier created during the Age Of Faerie to contain creatures, which was threatening to break down and set them free. Overall, *Elfstones Of Shannara* is about responsibility for yourself and others, and how far you're willing to take responsibility for what you know

is right. You're the little man, you're going to get kicked, you have no chance, but you somehow find the strength to do what you have to do. So those are all part and parcel

of the story. And I wanted some kind of an epic battle, so that became part of it, too."

Brooks expresses excitement over the TV series, though it's obvious that he has a fairly pragmatic view of the process of adaptation and the needs of a medium different from the one *Shannara* began in.

"You have to go into it with the idea that it's a collaborative effort," he states matter of factly. "It's an adaptation. It is not a paint-by-the-numbers experience. So you have to be willing to step away and give space to the creative people in that medium to do the job they need to do. In the case of the *Shannara* TV show, that was kind of my plan going in, and it's worked out, because the writers are great. They have been absolutely terrific, and I told them up front. I said, 'Look, you do what you need to do, but don't trample all over it please.' And they haven't. I can't ask for more than that."

The Shannara Chronicles is expected to air on MTV in the US later in 2015.



Lord Of The Rings star John Rhys-Davies will appear in *The Shannara Chronicles*.



scifi wales

Founder Robert Dyer tells us what to expect from North Wales' upcoming sci-fi convention

Scifi Wales is the new sci-fi, comic and gaming event in North Wales.

Organised by UK Conventions Ltd, it will be held at the impressive Venue Cymru in Llandudno, and will take place in support of the Alzheimer's Society.

Scifi Wales has already picked up a lot of support, something Dyer happily mentions. "We have some amazing fans who interact with us through social media on a daily basis, all of whom we can't wait to meet at Scifi Wales in September," said Dyer. "We also have the support of some great local businesses within Llandudno and the surrounding areas."

The roster of attendees makes for impressive reading, with *Red Dwarf* stars Robert Llewellyn and Hattie Heyridge, John Challis (*Only Fools And Horses*) and Paul Kasey (*Being Human*) already confirmed. The exclusive book launch for Gerry Anderson's *Gemini Force One: Ghost Mine* (Book Two) will also take place, with author MG Harris in attendance. In addition, there will be autograph rooms, a traders hall, talks and panels, a free-to-play retro arcade and much more besides to ensure that there is something for everyone.

Dyer finished, "We love sci-fi, and we hope everyone will support this new event."

Scifi Wales takes place on 5 September at Venue Cymru in Llandudno. Tickets start at just £10 from www.scifi.wales and also by calling the Venue Cymru box office on 01492 872000.

FIVE THINGS WITH RZA

The star of *The Man With The Iron Fists 2* on why he loves directing

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

1 The journey continues

RZA delivered his martial arts extravaganza *The Man With The Iron Fists* back in 2012, and he tells us he always had more adventures in mind for his titular character. "I can say yes to that. I mean, it was a hope; a hope and a dream, right?" he says. "We had a whole story, history, present and future of the character, and in part one we were only able to show only so much about him, so I'm glad we had a chance to go back and develop him more and show his growth. I look forward to his next episode if we do it again."

2 Killer collaborators

When it came to plotting the movie, RZA tells us that he turned to his old collaborator, Quentin Tarantino. "I always ask his advice," he explains. "Quentin told me, 'I know you have a big imagination RZA, but on this one here just focus on a few characters.'" That meant no room for Russell Crowe's Jack Knife, despite some big ideas from the first film's star. "Russell was like, 'Let old Jack Knife do this or do that!'" he remembers. "But this story picks up years later, and Thaddeus is tired of killing. He's had enough of it"

3 Kung fu is strong

RZA's love of old kung fu movies is still very much in evidence in this sequel, and he tells us that it's been a lifelong passion. "First thing, of course, was the action. And as I got older, I started loving the themes: brotherhood, loyalty, the fight against oppression. That's part of what helped me make the Wu-Tang Clan; we dealt with brotherhood, we dealt with loyalty, and we dealt with sticking together and fighting against that which was against us. Those themes have been throughout a lot of kung fu movies, and I guess they found their way into my music, and they definitely found their way into my movies."

4 Baddest soundtrack alive

The soundtrack for the first film was incredible, and RZA tells us that he knew he had to find time to work with collaborator Howard Drossin on the second film's score. However, the intense work ethic took its toll on Drossin's family life. "Howard's wife knows that when RZA comes over, Howard is not going to be in the house a lot!" he laughs. "The first one I felt a little bad, how much time it took and how many times he missed dinners and some of his son's sporting events, so it was embarrassing to knock on his door and say, 'Howard, let's do it again!' But I promised him that this time it won't take as long."

5 Captain of the ship

Unlike the first movie, RZA isn't behind the camera for *The Man With The Iron Fists 2*, but he is full of praise for director Roel Reiné. "Roel is a good director, man," he enthuses. "I was happy I made that decision, because it gave me a chance to focus on the character." However, he tells us that he's determined to direct again soon. "Yeah, directing is my favourite expression of myself. I really love my music career, I have fun as an actor, but directing just seems like Captain Kirk. And it seems like I'm a Captain Kirk type of guy."



The Man With The Iron Fists 2 is available to buy on Blu-ray and DVD now.



© Rex

THERE LIVED
A YOUNG
GIRL AND
A WIZARD
NAMED
DRAGON...



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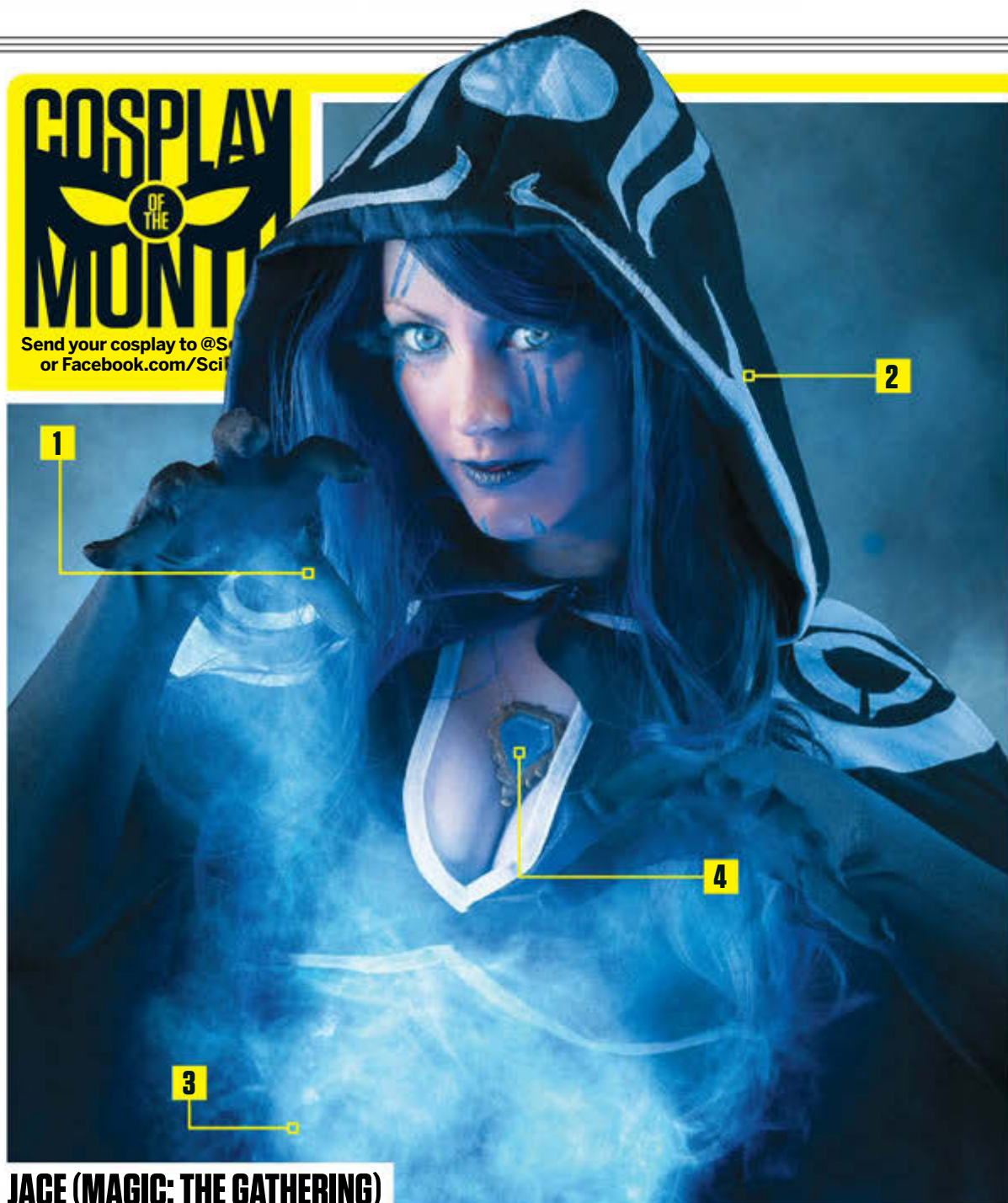


**CAPTAIN MARVEL FOOTAGE
WAS SHOT FOR AVENGERS 2**

tinyurl.com/nsn5tdl

COSPLAY OF THE MONTH

Send your cosplay to @SciFiNow or Facebook.com/SciFiNow



JACE (MAGIC: THE GATHERING)

COSPLAYER: ARANEL COSPLAY **FROM:** GLASGOW, SCOTLAND **PHOTO:** THE KIRKY STUDIO **TWITTER:** @ETERNAL_ARANEL **FACEBOOK:** /ARANELOCOSPLAY

1 THE CHARACTER

I love *Magic: The Gathering*! It's a huge part of my life, so I had to cosplay from it. Jace is my favourite Planeswalker [some of the most powerful beings in the multiverse and are the thematic identities of players] and pretty much the face of the game. I've read and collected all the different comics and books following his story in the Multiverse. I wanted to make this costume since I started playing, but it always seemed such a daunting project and I wanted to do it perfectly.

2 THE COSTUME

I made the dress from a gorgeous sparkly blue-black silk and it's fully lined with bias edging. The corset is made from black pleather sewed in multiple layers of lines to give the same impression as the reference. The cloak is a wool blend that drapes and floats beautifully. All the white designs were appliquéd (the art of attaching smaller pieces of fabric to larger pieces) on. I based the colouring off the navy Mind Sculptor art, as opposed to newer Jace art, which is more turquoise blue.

3 THE DESIGN

Jace is a male character and a highly talented Blue Mage. I thought it would be quite a funny twist to gender-bend him because blue mana is all about control and illusions. I drew some inspiration for the design from a very talented artist friend as well as another character from *Magic: The Gathering*, called Lilliana. The dress is based on a Chinese cheongsam, which are very elegant and beautiful dresses. I kept all the swirly designs accurate to the reference from the cards!

4 THE ACCESSORIES

The only accessory that was made to go with this costume was a Mox Sapphire necklace. An artifact card from the very set of *Magic: The Gathering* and one of the Power Nine; which are considered the nine most powerful cards in the game. It was made from clay and painted with acrylic paint, to give the metallic and gem effect. The first time I wore this costume I also had a clear acrylic ball with blue LEDs inside to give the illusion that I was casting a spell in my hands!

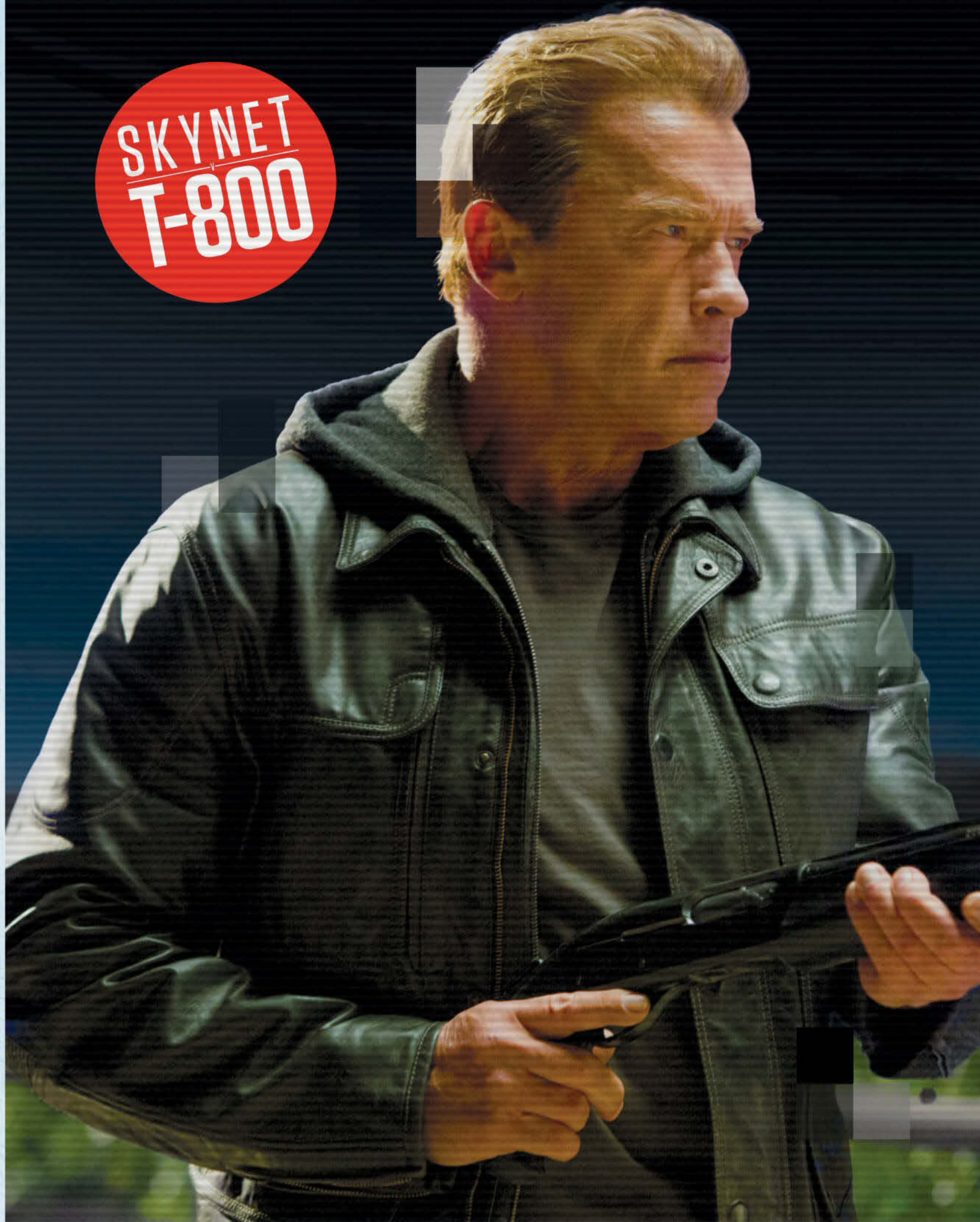
N A O M I N O V I K



Buy it at your local Waterstones or Waterstones.com



SKYNET
T-800



LISTEN, AND UNDERSTAND. THAT
TERMINATOR
IS OUT THERE.

IT CAN'T BE BARGAINED WITH. IT CAN'T BE
REASONED WITH. IT DOESN'T FEEL PITY,
OR REMORSE, OR FEAR. AND IT

ABSOLUTELY
WILL NOT STOP,
EVER UNTIL
YOU ARE
DEAD

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL INTERVIEWS STEVE NASH



COVER FEATURE

Terminator Genisys



YOU CAN'T STOP THE TERMINATOR. NO MATTER HOW MUCH PUNISHMENT IT TAKES, IT WILL FIND A WAY TO KEEP ON COMING. THOSE FIRST TWO FILMS REMAIN AT THE VERY PINNACLE OF THE ACTION SCI-FI GENRE, BUT IT'S SUFFERED TWO BAD SEQUELS AND A DECENT-BUT-CANCELLED TV SHOW, AND NOW IT'S BACK FOR MORE. THAT SIGNATURE LINE THAT ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER IS ASKED TO DELIVER WHEREVER HE GOES HAS PROVEN TO BE TRUE.

"My early memories of this franchise were all around *Terminator 2*, and I remember seeing that film a ton of times," enthuses Jai Courtney, who plays Kyle Reese. "It was something that my sister and I had on VHS, and I always kind of idolised the young John Connor as this rebellious kid. They're written so well, those early films, it's easy to go on that journey and invest in that level of fantasy."

Indeed, every genre fan's got their first *Terminator* memory, and we're willing to bet that John Connor actor Jason Clarke shares his with a lot of them. "Just Arnold," he states simply. "That big, impressive... I mean, he was a Terminator. I'd never heard that term before. And that's what it was. What he was. He just terminated. Cameron had the eternal ability to make him... he's a bad guy, a destroyer, and yet there was something that made you want to watch him. Like [James] Gandolfini had in *The Sopranos*, you know. Cameron was well ahead of it. That he created this iconic character that was eminently watchable, yet was supposed to be a bad guy, but then wasn't. And in *T2*, totally reversed it."

A total reversal seems to be the order of the day once more in *Terminator Genisys*. During the film's early days, everyone seemed to be very cagey about whether or not it was a remake, a reboot or a reimagining, as if they were unsure of the preferred moniker. It all starts on familiar ground, with Connor (Jason Clarke) sending Reese (Courtney) back in time to save his mother Sarah (*Game Of Thrones*' Emilia Clarke) from a machine that's been dispatched to kill her. But once Reese arrives in 1984, he quickly realises



John Connor (above) and the T-800 are back – but not as you remember them.

that everything's not as it should be. Sarah isn't the meek waitress in need of rescuing that he was told about; the T-800 has been here for years, getting her ready for the war, and Skynet's not been hanging around either; a T-1000 is the least of their worries.

"I think this is the thing about this film: there are things that they have put forward that will change the shape of what we know," explains Courtney. "Because of events changing – there's an access point in the time-space continuum – the past is altered. And therefore, all the circumstances are completely not what [Reese] expected."

In some ways, going back to the beginning in this way seems like the only logical choice. *Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines* did the obvious thing, bringing Arnie back to face a new model of Terminator (Kristanna Loken) and protect moody burn-out John Connor

(Nick Stahl), while *Terminator: Salvation* threw a bucket of grit at us and dumped us into the middle of the man-versus-machine war, with Christian Bale as a grizzled soldier JC. Getting another movie off the ground after McG and the Bale-Out seemed to be difficult, with rights going up for auction and scripts coming and going, until some help came from Annapurna's Megan Ellison, the woman who's made a name for herself financing a raft of acclaimed dramas like *Her*, *The Master*, *Foxcatcher* and *American Hustle*, and her brother David, who runs Skydance. Together, they picked up the rights and threw out the existing script to develop a new series of films.

"I knew [producer] David Ellison and Megan, his sister, who I did *Zero Dark Thirty* and *Lawless* with," remembers Clarke. "We'd been talking about things for a while, and Megan had been talking

TERMINATOR GENISYS

That Terminator Is Out There

“IT IS ONE OF THE MOST
ICONIC FEMALE ROLES,
SO I JUST COULDN'T
TURN THAT DOWN. I
WAS INCREDIBLY
EXCITED ABOUT
PLAYING IT”
EMILIA CLARKE

about this film when she bought the option for it. So then it all came down to the script, and David was confident and spent a lot of time and effort getting the script to the point where it was. And then he said, 'Read this.' I read it and I was very, very interested at that point. I was like, 'I'd love to do this, actually, I really would.'"

It may have been the script that won Jason Clarke over, but when it came to the role of Sarah Connor, Emilia Clarke tells us that playing one of the defining sci-fi action heroines isn't something you say "No" to. "It is one of the most iconic female roles, so I just couldn't turn that down," she enthuses. "I was incredibly excited about playing it. And in so far as changing image-wise for it, every opportunity I have to be different, every opportunity I have to remove myself from how I am day-to-day into a character, I will take with both hands."

Emilia Clarke plays the new and very different Sarah Connor.



"SARAH CONNOR?"

EVOLUTION OF AN ACTION LEGEND



The Terminator

(1984) Linda Hamilton

The first Sarah is a waitress who suffers through kids dumping their food in her apron and guys standing her up before Kyle Reese sweeps in and saves her.



Terminator 2

(1991) Linda Hamilton

A few years later and she is a badass in a mental institution. She's got a bunker full of guns, lost her people skills and is fully dedicated to the mission. Iconic.



Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines

(2003) Coffin

Hamilton reportedly turned down the chance to reprise her role, and Sarah doesn't appear. Even her coffin is just full of guns.



Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles

(2008) Lena Headey

The underrated TV spin-off had Headey as a survivor trying to look after her teenage son in LA.



Terminator: Salvation

(2009)

Linda Hamilton (voice)

McG's woeful sequel had a welcome reappearance from Linda Hamilton, even if it just was as a voice on a tape.

COVER FEATURE

Terminator Genisys

“CAMERON AND I TALK NOT ONLY ABOUT THIS MOVIE; WE TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING, BECAUSE WE’RE VERY GOOD FRIENDS AND WE TALK REGULARLY”
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER



HE FILM ALSO GAVE HER THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH DIRECTOR ALAN TAYLOR, WHO MADE SEVERAL EPISODES OF *GAME OF THRONES* BEFORE PROVING HIS BLOCKBUSTER CHOPS WITH *THOR: THE DARK WORLD*. “AMAZING! AND PROBABLY WHY I GOT THE JOB!” SHE LAUGHS. “IT’S PROBABLY WHY I AM SITTING RIGHT HERE. GETTING TO WORK WITH ALAN AGAIN WAS A COMPLETE DREAM, BECAUSE WE ALREADY HAD A RELATIONSHIP, WE ALREADY HAD A DIALOGUE, SO STEPPING INTO THAT GAVE WHAT COULD BE A REALLY INTIMIDATING, SCARY DAY OF STUNTS AND GUNS, A LOT OF EASE.”

If anyone’s in doubt about Clarke’s suitability, a look at her performance as the Khaleesi should settle the debate. Linda Hamilton and James Cameron transformed the character of Sarah Connor from a terrified waitress into a hardened warrior over the course of two movies, giving the genre its strongest heroine since Ellen Ripley in *Alien*, and Clarke is well aware of the shoes that she’s stepping into.

“The mantle of Linda Hamilton was [there], definitely,” she remembers. “She and Jim Cameron created this incredible female role, this iconic, powerful woman, so that pressure was definitely rife... I watched [the movies] growing up, and had looked to Linda Hamilton’s Sarah Connor as an inspiration for Daenerys when I first started doing *Game Of Thrones*.” However, she tells us that the new timeline gives her the opportunity to bring something new to the character. When Reese meets her in *Genisys*, she seems to have already reached T2 levels of badassdom. “While [Hamilton’s performance] was resonating with me, so far as that being the essence of who this Sarah is, her back story is so incredibly different that the Sarah you get to meet in our movie is an entirely different character. So in that sense, I had free rein to really make her my own and to take her to a different place that Linda had left her in T2.”

The role of Kyle Reese had its own challenges for Jai Courtney. The character is a determined action hero, but he’s also a romantic, whose journey back through time seems in many

ways to have been driven by a story and a Polaroid. He's not just here to save mankind; he's here to save the woman he loves. For an actor who's been making a career out of playing tough guys with various degrees of wisecracking, Courtney tells us that Reese made him dig a little deeper. "It was actually an emotional thing," he explains. "It was trying to maintain this sort of strength in Reese, but find more vulnerability than I guess I'm used to... I've never played a character where there's a true love story that's explored. And he's a guy who because of the circumstances, thinks that he's there to be the hero, but when he gets there he's just in the way. Sarah Connor is completely prepared for her destiny and what's about to unfold, and Reese is kind of shaking up that entire plan. So yeah, it was just interesting to really play that dynamic and fight against the instinct to kind of be the hero."

Of course, it wouldn't be a *Terminator* film without Arnold Schwarzenegger (that's right *Salvation*, we see you). The action icon has been busy since his retirement from politics, launching himself into a series of action films (*Escape Plan*, *Sabotage*, *The Last Stand*), many of which have not hit the box-office highs they were hoping for. There can be no question, however, that the role of the T-800 is his. "It's great to be back again," he enthuses. "Especially knowing that usually studios switch out

characters. How many James Bonds we have had? And Batman and Spider-Man and all this. So the same could be the case with Terminator. I felt honoured that I was asked back again."

His isn't the only shadow that looms large over the franchise. If you assumed that Schwarzenegger would want to talk to his old buddy James Cameron about returning to the role of the T-800, you'd be right. "Cameron and I talk not only about this movie; we talk about everything, because we're very good friends and we talk regularly," explains Schwarzenegger. "So of course we talked about this movie too. As a matter of fact, the writer is the writer from his last movie, from *Avatar* [Laeta Kalogridis]. I think Cameron feels great about it. And the reason why I was interested in being in the movie is because I always loved three characters that I played: one was the Terminator character, another one was the Twins character; and the other one was the Conan character. Because each one of them was kind of a stepping-stone for me in my career... So it's great to be back again."

It's hard to suppress a geeky grin when you see Arnie striding out as the *Terminator* again. Those sunglasses haven't made an appearance yet, but give him a shotgun, a leather jacket and a glowing red bionic eye, and there's no mistaking him. That nostalgic thrill goes double for the actors who actually got

to share a scene with the icon. "It was awesome, man," enthuses Courtney. "I mean, the wonderful thing about a guy in Arnold's position is that he still loves doing it, and that's not always the case. Some guys who've made a career out of action films, it wears a little thin and it can be tough. I mean, I get it. Even in the short time I've been working, that stuff is exhausting, and demand now to be athletic is greater than ever and actors have to rise to the challenge. And it's just inspiring to see a dude who's had such a wonderful career in and out of showbusiness to maintain such passion for it. Not only for that stuff, but for the authenticity and the integrity of the storytelling within this world. I think knowing that he was coming on board really legitimised the idea of it for me. Had I heard about another *Terminator* film being, but it wasn't with Arnold, I don't think I would have been as excited."

"I mean Arnold is, in himself, an icon, let alone reprising the role of being a Terminator on top of that, so you really expected an icon to walk into the room so far as it being a huge ego," remembers Emilia Clarke. "And when I first met him it was at the read-through and you felt the tension in the room of just waiting for the Terminator to arrive, and he just defused the tension instantly with his charm and ease and comedy. After the first read-through and getting to hear him say those

Events in *Genisys* mimic the opening scenes of *The Terminator* – at least for a while.



WAIT, HEAR ME OUT...

SOME FILMS MAKE THEIR SEQUELS HARDER THAN THEY NEED TO BE.



Highlander II: The Quickening (1991)

We've established these guys as immortals, right? How do we top that? Okay, how about... they're aliens? And, we can set the film in the future too! What do you mean Sean Connery's character is dead? We don't care, bring him back!



Jason X (2001)

Movie number ten, this is a big deal everybody. What haven't we done? He's gone to New York (kinda), he's been blown up and possessed people (right?). Have we gone to space? No? Why the hell not? Make it happen! Oh, and give him an upgrade too. Really sci-fi it up.



Alien: Resurrection (1997)

Well, Sigourney really screwed us. Had to kill off Ripley, didn't she? Well, we can't make a film without her. So how do we bring her back? Plunging into a vat of molten lead seems pretty definitive... Wait. Cloning. Done. Easy. Get me Jeunet.



Jaws: The Revenge (1987)

I'm worried that people are losing interest in the shark. Sure, he's a shark, but why is he so angry? We need to really get into this, give him motivation. Give him a reason to be a stone-cold killer. No, I don't think it sounds stupid. And neither does Michael Caine's bank account.



Blair Witch 2: Book of Shadows (2000)

Holy crap, no one was expecting that grainy home-made movie to make that much money. We need to move on this fast. What do you mean a sequel would spoil the illusion of reality? We'll make it meta! A movie about the movie? Ooh, with a spooky owl!

COVER FEATURE

Terminator Genisys

lines, you all got it out, you were all kind of, 'We've heard it now, we've felt the tingles for the first time,' and then we got to work."

Terminator: Genisys sees Arnie in full T2 mode, a deadly protector who's been adapting to humanity to blend in. A grin still seems to be beyond him, though, as shown in the film's trailer ("I know it needs work," deadpans Sarah). After arriving in Sarah's life when she was five years old, the T-800 has been helping to prepare the mother of mankind's last hope ever since. Naturally, this has had some impact on her development as a well-rounded person. "Well, it really dried out her sense of humour, because there is not a lot to go on there," laughs Clarke. "Not too many riveting conversations to be had with a machine."

an entering of the machine; there's a synthesisation there. And something happens to John, and he comes back a different being. And it didn't necessarily need to be a bad one or a machine; it's a new incarnation of what the possibility of the future can be in his own mind. John is now part Terminator, part human, part something else."

It's the kind of character change that can turn a fanbase against you, and Clarke tells us that he was determined that full complexities of it were discussed in depth. "It was very important for Alan [Taylor, director] and myself to have explored it before we came to the shoot, to make sure that we were enjoying our choices and they worked on a long arc. And it was also important that John is not just a villain;



Jason Clarke plays John – with a twist.



he is, but he's still in a way pursuing his original goal, which is to be the saviour of mankind. But it opened up a whole lot of other possibilities for a man that is burdened by war and by his prophecy and all that, to suddenly be free again. Like Eddie Furlong was in T2. He was a free, smart, wisecracking kid who's just alive. It was enjoyable."

While the issue of whether or not Clarke's John Connor is a villain may still be up the air, at least for the actor, the fact remains that he is the unstoppable force, and the actor tells us that he can't wait for audiences to see some of the big sequences. "There were some fucking amazing ones," he enthuses. "Wait until you see it. Remember T2? Nobody had seen what Cameron did before. They're spending



HE FILM'S BIGGEST ROLE REVERSAL WILL BE SEEN IN JOHN CONNOR. WE'VE SEEN HIM AS AN ANGRY TEENAGER, WE'VE SEEN HIM AS AN ANGRY BURNOUT, WE'VE SEEN HIM AS AN ANGRY RESISTANCE LEADER, BUT *TERMINATOR: GENISYS* TAKE HUMANITY'S SAVIOUR AND TURN HIM INTO OUR WORST ENEMY. AS THE TRAILERS HAVE REVEALED, JOHN CONNOR IS NOW A TERMINATOR.

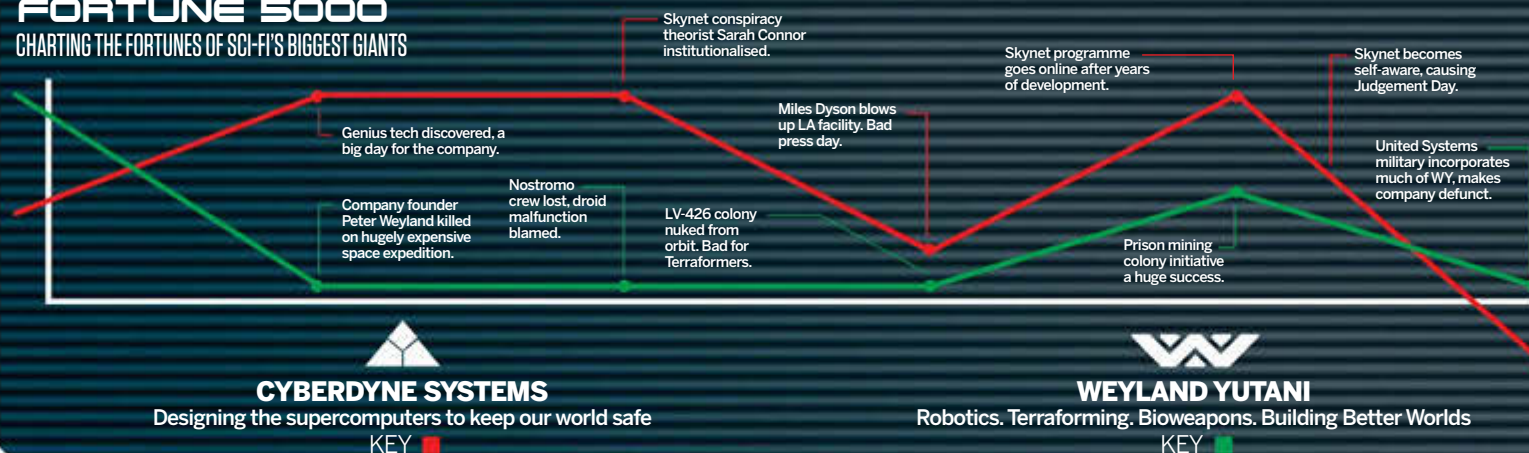
"He's a guy that's burdened by that, by years of war, fighting and struggle, trying to hope that he can change it," explains Clarke. "And then there's a deal, a bargain, a devil, a taking over,



“WHAT USED TO BE
CONSIDERED SCI-FI NOW
IS ALMOST BECOMING
A REALITY
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

FORTUNE 5000

CHARTING THE FORTUNES OF SCI-FI'S BIGGEST GIANTS



TERMINATOR GENISYS

That Terminator Is Out There

a lot of money on what John becomes and what I look like... It's amazing."

Effects are all very well and good, but we'd be disappointed if the film didn't involve Arnie putting himself through some ridiculous stunt work. However, he tells us that they're not always as cool to film as they are to watch. "I wouldn't say 'cool'. I would say tedious," he explains. "Because all the stuff that looks cool, to get there is tedious; you're in a harness, you get thrown around, you bang into things. Then you get dropped every so often! By accident! It's always very tough work, these action movies. But then when you see it, you know, it's fantastic. I think that the end product is fun, but you've got to be very disciplined and you've just got to always focus on the end goal."

Focus was crucial for Emilia Clarke, who had to live up to her predecessor's iconic status as a gun-toting, truck-driving action hero, skills that don't get called on much in *Game Of Thrones*. "I did a lot of training for the gun work that I had to do, because I felt very strongly that it was one of her really big calling cards, and having a gun thrust into her hands at the age of five, from her now Terminator father, I really wanted to get really good at that," she remembers. "So I got adept at taking them apart, putting them together again, cleaning, all of that cool stuff. Then so far as training goes, the practical strength that I needed to get through an 18-hour day where I was running up hills and firing guns and having fights, you have to be careful about what you eat so you have enough energy. It's a boys' movie, so I had to bring it. I had to know that I was going to get on set and be a little bit better than them at the stunt stuff – or at least try. I am an intimidating force!"



The series' new direction will leave everyone guessing.



The war against the machines takes a horrifying new turn.

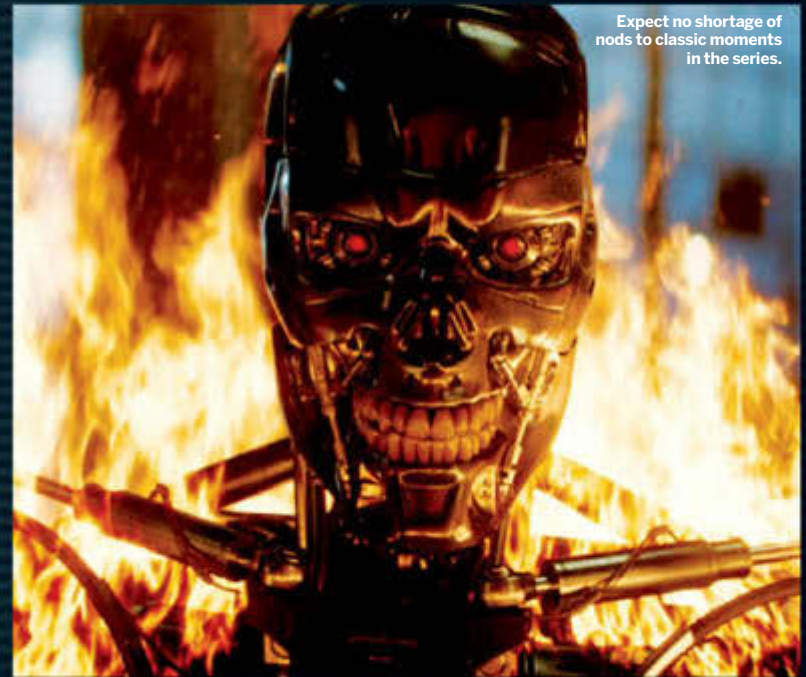


Without wanting to cast aspersions on the stunt skills of the newbies, you'd assume that the real test would be selling Arnie, and he tells us that this new generation certainly passed the test. "Fantastic," he enthuses. "I'm so fortunate that I have such a great cast around me... Emilia has done such a fantastic job in training herself and preparing for this role. And all the other guys... Jai came all pumped up, he's like muscles and veins everywhere. I said to those guys, 'I feel like I'm back on Muscle Beach with all you guys around.' It's a very impressive team of people that I had around me."

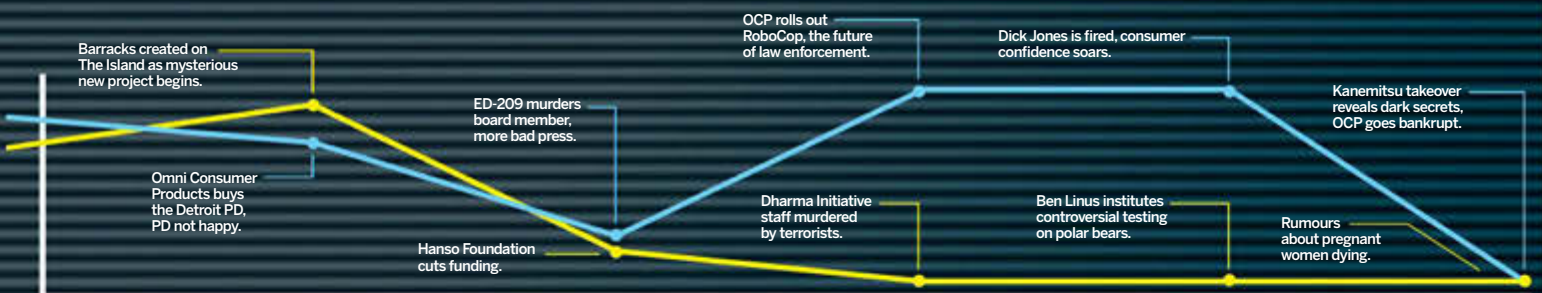
It certainly is an impressive team, as Paramount is keen for *Genisys* to be the start of a new trilogy. Whether or not this latest chapter will live up to first

two films remains to be seen, but there can be no question that the appetite is there. "I think that the people are fascinated with the idea of time travel," explains Arnie. "I think, in this case, they like it specifically because what used to be considered sci-fi now is almost becoming a reality. And also they like... the indestructible kind of a Terminator character; they see that he can be a villain and can be very destructive – like he is in this movie. But he can also be a protector like in this movie, where he is kind of like a fatherly figure to this girl... They see it as a heroic character in a way, because even when he does something bad, he's a machine."

Terminator Genisys will be released in UK cinemas on 3 July.



Expect no shortage of nods to classic moments in the series.



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THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

HAVING MADE THE STEP FROM TV TO FILM, TERMINATOR GENISYS MARKS THE LATEST STAGE IN THE RISE OF ALAN TAYLOR. WE SPEAK TO THE DIRECTOR ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF THE FIFTH MOVIE IN THE SERIES... WORDS JOE NAZZARO

IF THERE'S ONE RULE ALL DIRECTORS SHOULD OBEY, IT'S THIS: NEVER GO ONLINE TO SEE WHAT FANS ARE SAYING ABOUT YOUR MOVIE. ESPECIALLY IF IT'S THE LATEST INSTALMENT in one of the biggest film franchises in history and you've replaced many of its most memorable characters with brand new actors.

That lesson has not been lost on Alan Taylor, a veteran of such fan favourites as *Sex And The City*, *The Sopranos* and *Game Of Thrones*, not to mention 2013's *Thor: The Dark World*. "I know, I know, I shouldn't do it!" concedes the director, who's in the final weeks of post-production of *Terminator Genisys*. "I never tracked anything in terms of online reaction before, until I got into *Thor*, but the fan base was so vocal and coherent, I actually found them useful, because they were very articulate with their concerns. So I came away from the Marvel experience thinking, 'This is like an open conversation!' but yes, you can go crazy, so I have to remember not to look too closely or too often."

Not surprisingly, stepping into the director's chair for the new *Terminator* film was a not-inconsiderable challenge for a number of reasons. "It was daunting terrain I was stepping into," admits Taylor, "partly because the first film had been so effectively achieved, and the second was such a fantastic, big-budget thriller. The third and fourth films had wandered off and gone astray a little bit, so coming in, I was very mindful of the stakes involved, and not wanting to disappoint."

"I was already sensing that voracious fan base that was already pretty weary. There were some fans who liked *Terminator 3* and 4, but for the most part people still felt burned by the last

two, so it was like being guilty until proven innocent in terms of taking on this one.

"In terms of specific challenges, this script was very different from the other *Terminator* films, so the biggest challenge was to try and fulfil its needs on both ends. It had to have grand set piece and epic action, which is what a blockbuster requires these days, but a lot of work also went into the characters, which wasn't simple stuff. We had our core duo of the lovers Kyle and Sarah, who had been established in the first film, and very strange father figures for each of them, so the core of this movie was these four characters that had very complicated relationships with each other.

"And to further complicate things, we put those four people through three separate timelines over the course of the film, so that was a lot to track while delving into those characters in ways they hadn't been delved into before.

"The most obvious one is John Connor, who had been the messiah in the other four films; the great man, upon who humanity hinges, but he takes quite a turn in our movie. We see him from the other side, so we were trying to be true to the intention of that character, while stretching that into a whole different direction, which was very daunting."

The actor who arguably gets put through his paces the most in this film is Arnold Schwarzenegger, who plays several incarnations of his T-800 character, from the original 1984 model, to an older, contemporary version nicknamed 'The Guardian.' "I couldn't imagine doing a movie he wasn't in," claims Taylor, "because for some reason,

“THERE WAS A LOT OF COMPLEXITY WE HAD TO GET THROUGH TO TELL THE STORY, AND TO TIE IT INTO THE PREVIOUS MYTHOLOGY WHILE BRANCHING OFF”

there aren't many franchises that are so wedded to a particular actor. The Bond movies have moved on, even though the same character is being played by different guy, but for whatever reason, these films seem to be firmly planted on Arnold's shoulders, so I couldn't imagine doing this one without him.

"The first time I went to meet him, I didn't know what to expect or what kind of personality I was going to encounter, so I was sort of braced for the worst, but from the first conversation we had over breakfast, all the way through prep, into shooting and out the other end, he was a joy to work with. He was eager, generous and constantly professional and common sense-ical and playful. He ate lunch with the crew every day, and collaborated effortlessly.

"I think Arnold's first scene we shot, he was walking along with a shotgun saying, 'I've been waiting for you!' and

Taylor was keen to appease the fanbase on *Terminator Genisys*.





Taylor with Chris Hemsworth on the set of *Thor: The Dark World*.

starts to fire the shotgun. It was the first time he was in character, and it clicked for me, the reason why there are only a handful of top icon characters that have lasted as long, and Arnold as the T-800 is one of them. He had a complex job; he had to play himself as his current age and as a younger version in a different timeline. Of course, we re-staged the 1984 action so he was also that guy, and at one point he had to fight himself, while playing both roles, so there was a lot for him to do."

As for some of the other key characters, the production sometimes followed the temptation of casting actors that resembled their predecessors from previous films. "That was a trap we fell into," notes Taylor, "and something we were sometimes measured against and upbraided for online, because the actors who play those roles were so beloved. Particularly Linda Hamilton, one of the great embodiments of a pop character in history, who transformed from naïve waitress in the first film to psychotic warrior in the second, so those were incredibly huge shoes to step into.

"With Emilia [Clarke], some people thought I brought her in because of our history with *Game Of Thrones*, but in fact she was already a favourite with people that had been working on the movie before I got there, so that was an early casting decision. After that, it was all about Kyle and John Connor.

"Casting Kyle was tricky, because a lot of people have feelings about Jai Courtney based on some of the work he's done where he's played villains and dangerous people, so there was some pushback about making him our Kyle. He auditioned many times, so he really

went through the wringer, but he was the one who was best for the role, and I think people will see him differently after they see him in it."

Pressed for a few personal highlights from the film, the director offers a few provisional (based on the fact that *Genisys* isn't finished yet). "I think one of them is the character work between our principals, Sarah and 'the Guardian,' as Arnold's character is known, which is like a father-daughter relationship; and the relationship between Sarah and Kyle.

"There was a lot of complexity we had to get through to tell the story, and to tie it into the previous mythology while branching off in a new direction so a lot of that had to be talked through on screen to bring the audience along, and I'm really proud of the character work between the principals there, and between Kyle and John Connor. Right now, that's probably where I can stand to watch the movie and actually relax and enjoy it the most. When it's all done and done, we'll see if there are other things that I could start to embrace too!"

Terminator Genisys will be released in cinemas on 3 July.



Taylor describes the relationship between Sarah and the T-800 as a "father-daughter relationship".



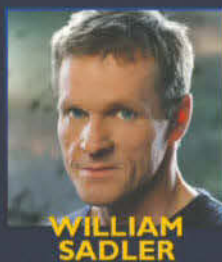
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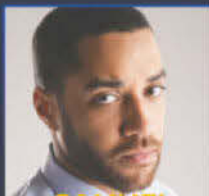
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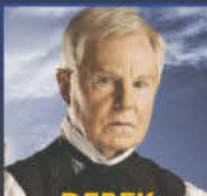
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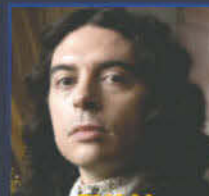
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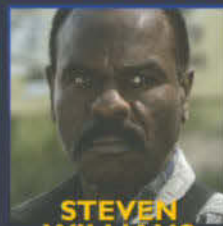
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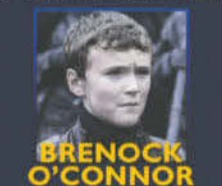
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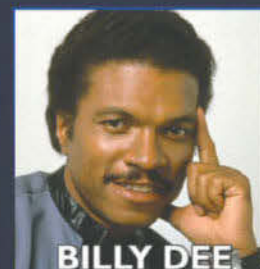
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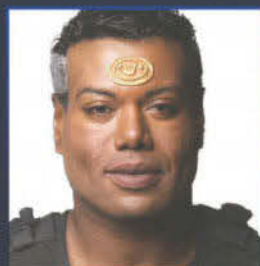
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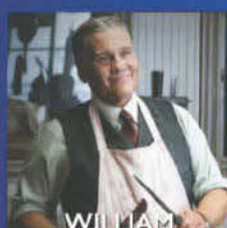
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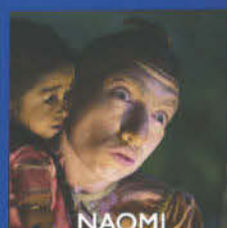
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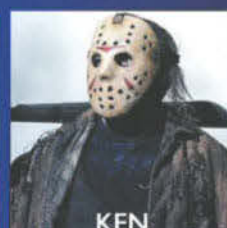
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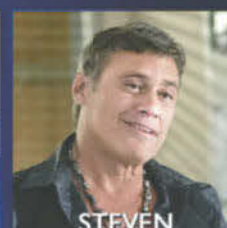
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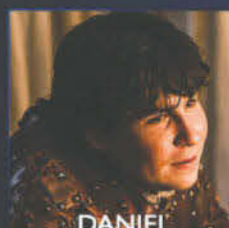
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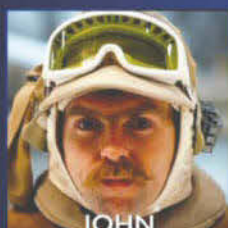
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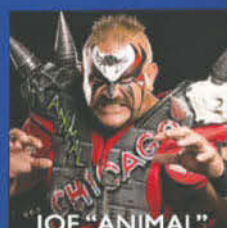
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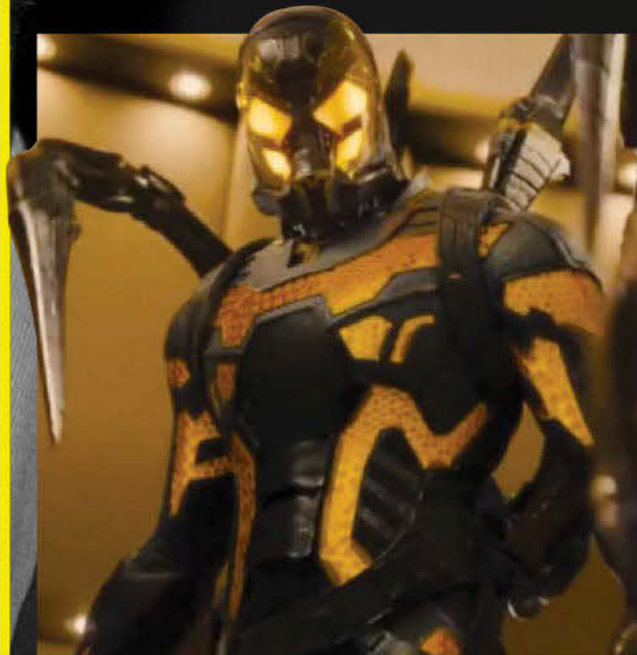
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MINIATURE HEROES

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL



WE TALK TO THE STRAIN'S COREY STOLL ABOUT GOING BAD AND WHY ANT-MAN IS THE SUPERHERO HIT YOU DIDN'T SEE COMING

COREY STOLL HAS HAD AN EXCEPTIONAL COUPLE OF YEARS. THROUGHOUT THE NOUGHTIES, HE PUT IN SOLID CHARACTER WORK BOTH AS A SERIES REGULAR AND A GUEST STAR ON PROCEDURAL SHOWS LIKE *LAW & ORDER: LOS ANGELES*, *THE UNUSUALS*, *LIFE ON MARS* AND *THE GOOD Wife*. A standout turn as Ernest Hemingway in Woody Allen's star-studded *Midnight In Paris* followed in 2010, but it wasn't until 2013 that he really broke through.

Stoll turned a lot of heads with his sensitive portrayal of alcoholic Representative Peter Russo in Netflix's flagship show *House Of Cards*. It's not easy to steal notice away from Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright, but his single season won rave reviews and earned him a Golden Globe nomination. Suddenly, the actor was in high demand. He got into a shouting match with Liam Neeson in *Non-Stop*, held his own alongside comedy veterans Tina Fey and Jason Bateman in *This Is Where I Leave You*, and will play Charlize Theron's jailed brother in upcoming Gillian Flynn adaptation *Dark Places*. Oh, and he's also the star

of his own show now: Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan's hit vampire series *The Strain*. From moustachioed heavies to driven CDC heroes, Stoll consistently finds a way to make his characters watchable and real.

Which is why we're particularly excited to see his performance as Marvel villain Darren Cross, aka Yellowjacket, in Peyton Reed's *Ant-Man*. The driven protégé turned rival of genius inventor Hank Pym (Michael Douglas), Cross has dangerous plans for shrinking-suit technology, forcing Pym to employ petty thief Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) to get it back.

The production has seen its fair share of publicity thanks to the departure of original director Edgar Wright just a couple of months before production began, but the quality of the cast has never been in question. With Rudd, Douglas, Evangeline Lilly, Michael Peña, Judy Greer and Bobby Cannavale all appearing, stealing scenes won't be easy, but we're betting on Stoll to take his fair share of the limelight.

• MARVEL IS SO SECRETIVE; HOW MUCH DID YOU KNOW WHEN YOU WERE APPROACHED BY THEM?

I knew it was *Ant-Man*, but of course, I didn't get the script. In fact, I think the sides were a mock-up, because they didn't want to give out the actual material.



• WERE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE *ANT-MAN* COMICS AT ALL?

No, I wasn't. Tangentially, he'd been in a few *Avengers* comics that I'd read, but I didn't know the whole story of Hank Pym and certainly none of that more controversial stuff about him. But the power intrigued me. There's that classic *Saturday Night Live* skit with all the superheroes at a party, and Ant-Man is sort of the loser because his power's just getting small. And that was my first impression of the power too; I just thought it was a lame power, but the more I thought about it, seeing the script and seeing how cool it was, it's actually kind of amazing that they haven't made a movie sooner.

• THE NEW TRAILER SHOWED OFF SOME INVENTIVE SET PIECES, PARTICULARLY THE FIGHT ON THE TOY TRAIN.

Yeah, and there's so much in the film. I think a lot of the challenge around the script was limiting it! Because it's really infinite when you think about all the visual puns and how physics changes, it really is an embarrassment of riches in terms of this whole world it opens, and also just whole new environments to have fights in, and different fighting techniques, you get the change in size to your advantage.

Paul Rudd and Michael Douglas play Scott Lang and Hank Pym respectively.

• SO DARREN CROSS IS A LOT MORE INTERESTED IN THE MILITARY APPLICATIONS...

Yeah, well he's trying to sort of have his cake and eat it too. I think he sees himself as this incredibly important figure in world history, and there are incredibly benign and positive things that you could do with that technology; you could actually sort of single handedly solve global warming if you could just shrink down all the emissions, things like that! But of course, that's not where the money is in his worldview, so he goes dark.

• BEING A VERY DRIVEN HERO IN *THE STRAIN*, COMIC-BOOK VILLAINY MUST BE A NICE CHANGE?

Definitely. There's a license when you're playing a villain to just really go for it. There's a side to the character that's really fun. And you can't not step onto these sets, you can't put the suit on that they give you; it's so big, it's so sort of operatic, that you can't enter that world without becoming bigger. And yet the emotions are big and real. This sense of wanting approval from this father figure really tortures him: there is a real core sense of just wanting approval. ➔



Stoll steps into the MCU as Darren Cross, aka Yellowjacket, in *Ant-Man*.





Stoll has taken on a starring role in Guillermo del Toro's *The Strain*.



The actor describes Cross as someone who's "trying to have his cake and eat it".



Ant-Man will see Stoll go in a different direction to his previous roles.

WHAT'S HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SCOTT LANG LIKE?

Scott is his rival as a protégé. When Darren finds out about Hank passing the torch onto Scott and letting him wear the suit, that's really the ultimate betrayal – he's been dying to do that. Scott is a reluctant hero; he needs to be convinced to take on this mantle, whereas Darren sees himself as the sort of rightful heir who's been replaced. So he does not like Scott! [laughs]

DOES HAVING SUCH A TALENTED CAST HELP YOU KEEP THESE BIG EMOTIONS GROUNDED IN REALITY?

Absolutely. I mean, a lot of my stuff was with Michael Douglas. There's a lot of scenes where you're making these huge emotional switches from elated to enraged in a very big way... but he is just very real, and even in these giant sets you make eye contact with Michael Douglas and he's really there, really listening and very generous as a performer.



He speaks positively about working on *Ant-Man* alongside Rudd.

DESPITE THE NEWS ABOUT EDGAR WRIGHT LEAVING, IT DOES SOUND AS THOUGH ANT-MAN SEEMS TO HAVE GONE INCREDIBLY SMOOTHLY. EVERYONE HAS BEEN TALKING ABOUT WHAT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IT WAS...

It really was. I know it's kind of boring! [laughs] I know it sounds like the standard press junket sort of thing, but I was kind of shocked at how collaborative and fun the whole process was. This was by far the biggest movie I've ever done, and you definitely get the sense that there's a lot going on that you're not even aware of, that it's this massive undertaking. But when the actors showed up on set, we really felt we were given a sense of ownership of our roles, and we think we all had pretty copious notes on the script and ideas, and you know, you really felt that Peyton and the producers were embracing that sense of engagement.

THERE ARE A LOT OF VERY TALENTED COMEDIC ACTORS IN THE MOVIE, AND PAUL RUDD REWROTE THE SCRIPT WITH ANCHORMAN'S ADAM MCKAY. WAS THERE ROOM FOR IMPROVISATION IN A MOVIE THIS BIG, WITH THIS MUCH PRESSURE?

Yeah, totally! It was a way of working where there are a lot of very important plot points that you have to get out and a lot of that, a lot of the job, I had a lot of exposition. And so there are things that are not negotiable in terms of what your lines are going to be, because you have a very complicated story here, you're trying to tell to a very broad audience, but there was always time and there was always an invitation to improv, and I always did, to varying degrees of success. But I always like working like that, where you have a strong script to rely on and you use that, but then that gives you a sort of springboard to play a little bit.

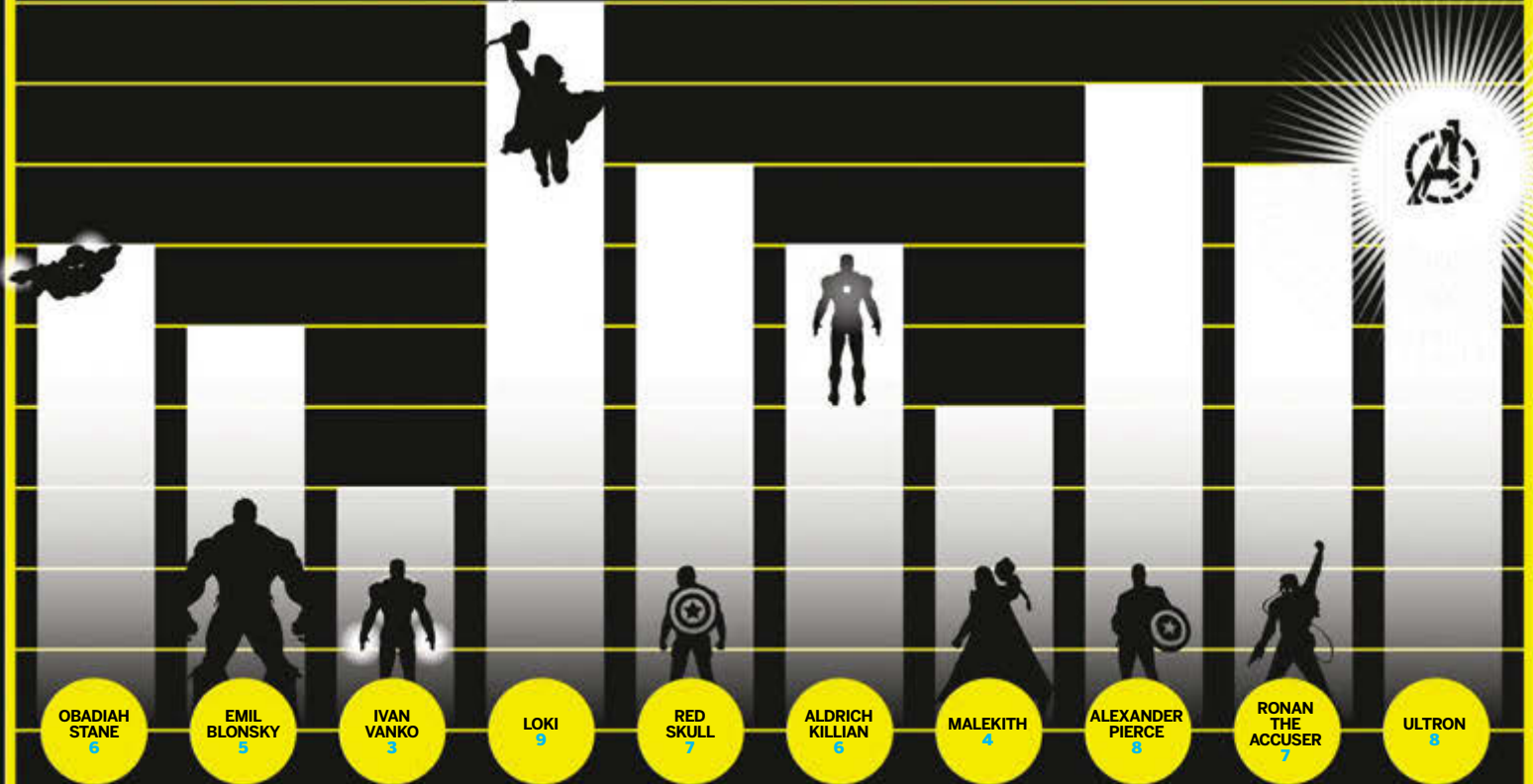
THE LAST TIME MARVEL RELEASED A FILM BASED ON A LESSER-KNOWN PROPERTY, IT WAS GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY. DO YOU THINK ANT-MAN COULD SURPRISE AUDIENCES IN THE SAME WAY?

I mean, that would be incredible to be a hit like that! [laughs] Of course, everybody wants that. All I can say is, I remember reading the script for the first time and continuing to read all the different revisions and just being sort of giddy. It really is so much fun, and it's a pleasure to be working on a movie, and know this is a movie that I would really die to see. There hasn't been a shrinking movie since *Innerspace* or *Honey, I Shrunk The Kid*, and technology has moved forward a little bit since then, so there's a whole new level of realism to that.

Ant-Man will be released in cinemas on 17 July.

THE EVIL LEAGUE OF EVIL

Breaking down just how fearsome Marvel's villains have been



OBADIAH STANE

Actor: Jeff Bridges

Stated goal: Killing Tony Stark and becoming the ultimate war-monger

Fearsome: Only really when he thinks he's trying to kill Tony. The concept of Jeff Bridges betraying someone is the scariest thing.

Character arc: A bit. He's bitter about Tony's Playboy lifestyle.

We know he likes pizza.

Destruction caused: He takes out a lot of cars while fighting Tony. In the grand scheme of things... pretty minimal.

EMIL BLONSKY

Actor: Tim Roth

Stated goal: Becoming a bigger badass than the Hulk

Fearsome: When he's Tim Roth, sure. When he's muscle-monster Abomination, a little less so.

Character arc: Kind of. He's a driven soldier who's pissed off about getting old, so agrees to juicing.

Destruction: Quite a lot. He trashes Harlem when he transforms, and it takes all of the Hulk's smashing power to bring him down.

IVAN VANKO

Actor: Mickey Rourke

Stated goal: Revenge on one Tony Stark for stealing his father's designs.

Fearsome: Tatted-up Russian prison Mickey Rourke is scary. When he's going on about his cockatoo, less so.

Character arc: There's a bit at the start, but Vanko gets lost among the smarmy clutter of *Iron Man 2*.

Destruction: Wrecks a Grand Prix and causes some carnage in Justin Hammer's factory with his electric whips.

LOKI

Actor: Tom Hiddleston

Stated goal: Become King of Asgard, and ruler of Earth.

Fearsome: Hiddleston manages the shift from sympathetic to scary in *Thor*, before really turning up the fear in *Avengers*.

Character arc: Certainly the strongest development of the Marvel villains, with three films of rage, scheming and anguish.

Destruction: Not much in *Thor*; just a small town in New Mexico. He's directly responsible for the New York carnage in *Avengers Assemble*, though.

RED SKULL

Actor: Hugo Weaving

Stated goal: HYDRA world dominance using Tesseract-powered technology.

Fearsome: It's Hugo Weaving, so yes, especially when he's just a Nazi officer.

Character arc: We do get some background into Johann Schmidt; he's gone through the same process as Cap, but went bad. Really bad.

Destruction: Not so much on screen, but he's a military commander in World War II, so yes, lots.

ALDRICH KILLIAN

Actor: Guy Pearce

Stated goal: Using 'terrorist' the Mandarin to distract everyone from his using Extremis for evil.

Fearsome?: Pearce is having too much fun to be particularly sinister. He's entertaining, especially when breathing fire.

Character arc: Yes! A needy nerd who was shunned by Tony is now a handsome villain with dashing muscle/assistants.

Destruction: A lot committed under the name of the Mandarin, and he wrecks Tony's Malibu mansion. Not cool, bro.

MALEKITH THE ACCURSED

Actor: Christopher Eccleston

Stated goal: Using the Ether to usher in an age of darkness.

Fearsome: Moderately. Eccleston is an imposing presence, and he manages to kill one of Thor's family.

Character arc: Not much. It's your basic vengeance for centuries old grievance deal. Feels like a lot was cut out to make room for Loki.

Destruction: A bit of central London comes in for a bad time, but Thor takes care of him pretty sharpish.

ALEXANDER PIERCE

Played by: Robert Redford

Stated goal: Fascist control of a globally dominant US by introducing a climate of fear.

Fearsome: Yes, in a Seventies spy-movie kind of way. He seems far too reasonable to be trusted, and he's cold as ice.

Character arc: He gets a bit, but his villain time is split between the big HYDRA revelation and the titular Winter Soldier.

Destruction: A lot. He unleashes Bucky on Washington DC, and his SHIELD helicopters crash to the ground fairly dramatically.

RONAN THE ACCUSER

Played by: Lee Pace

Stated goal: Ethnic cleansing. He wants to destroy the Xandarians.

Fearsome: He's big, he's got a huge hammer, and a vendetta against an entire planet, so pretty fearsome.

Character arc: He's got some exposition at the start, and he's fed up of Thanos talking down to him.

Destruction: He's committing genocide before the film starts. Rocket and the Ravagers keep Xandar safe but many Nova Corps are lost holding him back.

ULTRON

Played by: James Spader

Stated goal: Saving Earth – which he plans to accomplish by wiping out the human race.

Fearsome: Spader's performance makes every sneer, quip and threat get under your skin.

Character arc: It's rushed, but it's there. He's disappointed in humanity and is up for a clean slate, by the most extreme means necessary.

Destruction: So much. He's made the Hulk smash Jo-Burg, some Seoul car carnage, and then there's flying Sokovia...



**Mr Terrific
"The Mastermind"**

You know me. You know how smart I am. I'm the third most intelligent man in the world, and I've brought you together because you're the best at what you do. This job requires tremendous skill, incredible abilities and nerves of steel. This is no ordinary heist. This is Wayne Manor we're talking about.



KICK ME!



reservoir capes

HOW DO YOU PULL OFF A HEIST LIKE ANT-MAN?
WE SHOW YOU HOW, WITH A HELPING HAND
FROM SOME OF COMICS' GREATEST HEROES...

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL ILLUSTRATIONS DAVID COUSENS

GETTING INTO WAYNE MANOR IS EASY. IT'S GETTING INTO THE BATCAVE THAT'S THE HARD PART. HARDER THAN THAT? GETTING OUT AGAIN. IF WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS

without getting the life pummelled out of us by the big man, we're going to need the best that the caped world have to offer. That's why I've brought you here today. Somewhere in Bruce Wayne's underground fortress is a chunk of Kryptonite that we desperately need. We've tried the polite way. Now, we try the impolite way.

I've chosen each of you for your incredible skill sets. Reed and Sue Richards, not only are you rich, famous and brilliant enough not to look out of place at one of Wayne's charity galas; you've got the skills to lift security keys and go undetected. We need someone who can get past the world's greatest detective's world's greatest security systems, which is where Cyborg and his genius tech comes in. Once we're past locked doors and managed to stay off the grid, there's the matter of avoiding any sensors. Spider-Man, you've got a knack for some amazing feats of dexterity. We're also going to need a distraction while we work, something loud and obnoxious to keep Bruce Wayne occupied. Say hello to Peter Quill.

If Wayne does catch on to what's happening, we need the kind of muscle that can stand up to the Batman. Luke Cage and Iron Fist, anyone who's disputed your skills as pugilists doesn't have teeth left to try again. Through all of this, it's vital that we maintain clear lines of communication that won't get us spotted. Ever wish you could read minds? Jean Grey can. Finally, our getaway driver. Two men have the keys to the cars in the Batcave. One is the guy we're robbing. The other's Robin, and he's driving us out of there. As for me? People call me Mr Terrific, but you can just call me sir.

© David Cousens

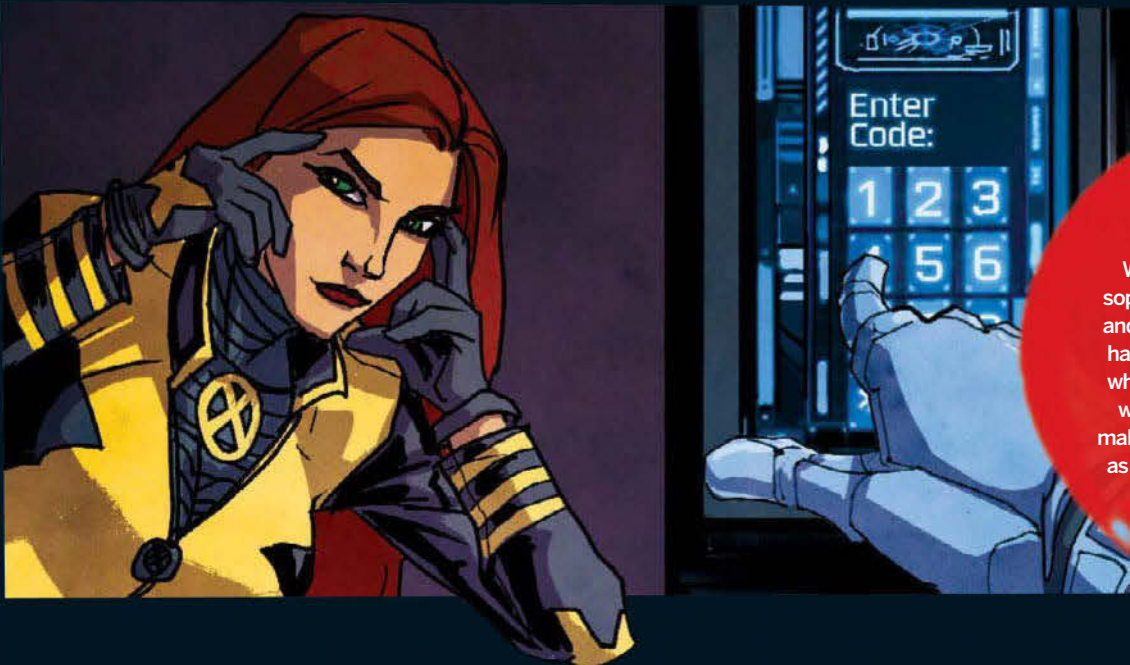
Luke Cage & Iron Fist "The Muscle"

We're hoping to get in and out without anyone getting hurt, but if anyone does need to get hurt, this duo will make sure it's the other guys. They've been bringing the pain for years, but they're good dudes and they'll make sure Alfred goes to sleep without any broken bones. He's an old man, I don't want that on my conscience.



Cyborg & Jean Grey "The Billion Dollar Brain"

Wayne Manor runs on the most sophisticated security tech there is, and there's not a man alive who can hack it. Fortunately, we know a guy who's basically a man plus. Cyborg will get into Wayne's system and make sure that we go undetected for as long as possible. Meanwhile, the uncanny Jean Grey will make sure we stay in touch and off the grid.



Peter Quill & Reed And Sue Richards

You don't bring Peter Quill on board for his 12 per cent-complete plans. You bring him to cause a distraction. When he shouts, "Bring it down hard," that's your cue. Reed can stretch to lift security cards, and Sue's invisibility makes her virtually undetectable.



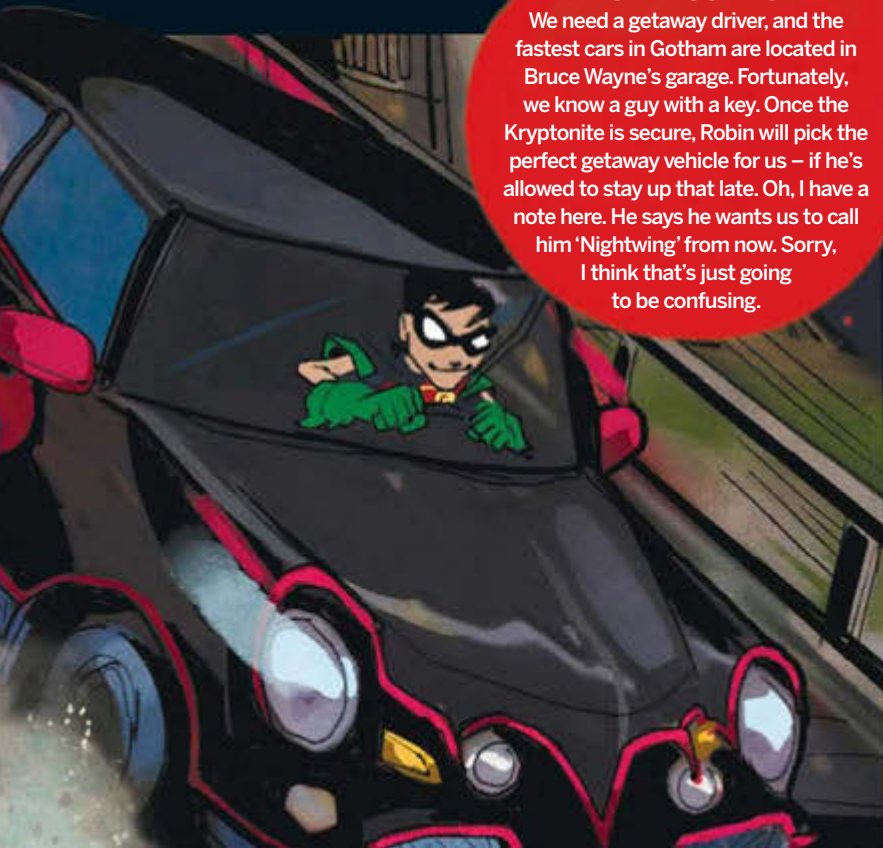


Spider-Man

Floor sensors. Laser grids. These are the kind of security elements we can expect to find at Wayne Manor, and they're the kind of security elements that mean absolutely nothing to Peter Parker. We're going to need your skills to Mission Impossible your way into the Bat Cave, Spidey. Just try not to sing the theme song while you do it.

Robin "The Wheel Man"

We need a getaway driver, and the fastest cars in Gotham are located in Bruce Wayne's garage. Fortunately, we know a guy with a key. Once the Kryptonite is secure, Robin will pick the perfect getaway vehicle for us – if he's allowed to stay up that late. Oh, I have a note here. He says he wants us to call him 'Nightwing' from now. Sorry, I think that's just going to be confusing.



Rejected Heroes List

The heavyweight contenders who don't make the cut

The Punisher?

No one gets killed. This guy lives to kill people. He's out.



Martian Manhunter?

Brilliant, lovely guy, but he does stand out from the crowd.



The Sandman?

Last time we tried to get him involved he just gave us some ponderous nonsense about time.



John Constantine?

His idea of a distraction is summoning a demon. We don't need that.



She-Hulk?

She's definitely clever, but if she freaks out, the whole thing falls down on our shoulders. Literally.



BROTHERS



SEESTRAS



WHEN IT COMES TO PLOT TWISTS, ORPHAN BLACK WINS. WE TALK TO ACTOR ARI MILLEN AND CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KERRY APPELYARD ABOUT FAMILY, BOY CLONES AND SEASON THREE

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

ORPHAN BLACK LIKES A GOOD PLOT TWIST. THE ONLY THING THAT COULD HAVE TOPPED HELENA KILLING HER BIRTH MOTHER, KIRA BEING KIDNAPPED AND DYAD BEING

secretly run by a sister clone at the end of the Season One was everything that happened in Season Two. But even Dr Leekie's sudden death and Rachel Duncan's eyeball incident were vanilla compared to the big reveal in the season finale. The introduction of four new *boy clones* – all played by Ari Millen – means Season Three could go anywhere.

Millen joined the show for the Season Two opener as Prolethean cult member Mark Rollins. Technically, he was on the side of the religious extremists, but it grew increasingly more difficult to decide whether he was actually a bad guy or not.

"The great thing about *Orphan Black* is that everyone lives in this grey area, and you never know who you can trust," Millen tells us. "There are so many plot twists and turns. Like, you have Mark... He starts off as the right-hand man to the main antagonist, but by the end of the season we like him

to a certain extent... and that speaks true of how Graeme Manson and the rest of the writers create the story. When you look at Helena as well, she's another example of someone that you ultimately fear, but now she's my favourite clone. It's back and forth, which I think is a lot more interesting. My hope is, especially with Castor, that people will go back and forth. They will fear them, but they will also love fearing them... And hopefully we can break their hearts by doing something that they don't want!"

Before Project Caster was introduced, Millen had no idea he would be staying on for Season Three as four different characters. The plan was for him to appear as Mark for five episodes and then be brutally killed off in the sixth. He even jokes that he was introduced to his would-have-been on-screen killer – Dylan Bruce, who plays Sarah's Season One monitor Paul – on his first day on set. But somewhere along the way the show's writers did a U-turn.

"It was something we contemplated in terms of the male clones, but really



MUST-SEE TV

Orphan Black

his strength as a character and where the story took shape and arrived at by the end of Season Two was almost like a kind of consequence of events,” says co-executive producer Kerry Appleyard. “But it was definitely motivated by Ari’s performance and how well he had shone in that Prolethean character... He’s such a strong actor, and I think he had a difficult job, but he pulled it off with aplomb. The Castor clones are raised by the military, so the differences between them are a lot subtler than the very well-defined differences between the sister clones... He had four to portray, and I think he really holds his own.”

Suddenly, Millen found himself making up the whole of the boy equivalent of Maslany’s Clone Club, a military-raised fraternity of male clones consisting of Mark, Seth, Rudy and Miller.

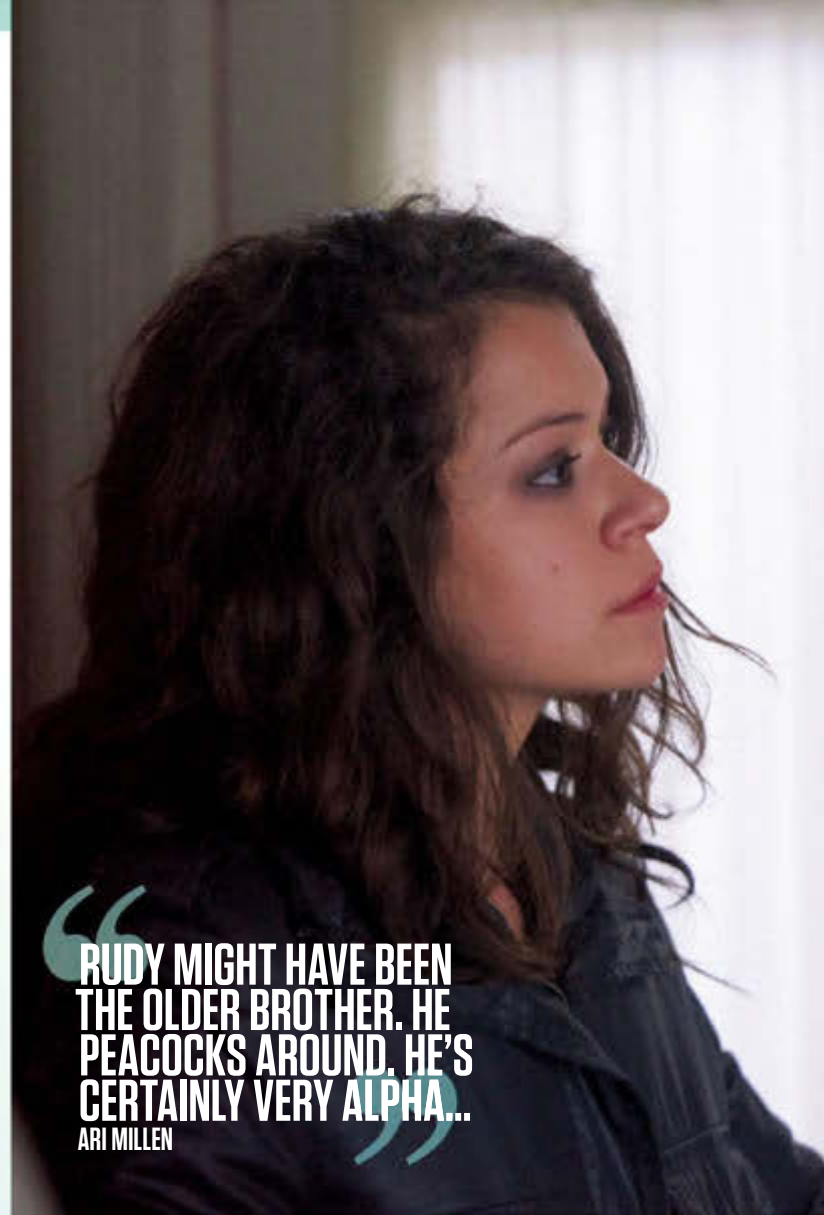
“They grew up together in this sort of little secret pod of brotherhood... [When I was developing these guys], I wanted to make sure that I had the dynamic between them and archetypes. Seth, I always thought, was the runt of the litter, and so he was always constantly seeking approval from his brothers. He might be seen as the most dangerous... because he’ll do more than any of the others to get that approval.”

“I think **maybe** Rudy might have been the older brother. He peacocks around. He’s certainly very Alpha... He loves to exert

that prowess over other people and figure out what it is that makes the other person tick, push their buttons and get them off their game... And then Miller: at one point he decided that climbing the ranks of the military was what we wanted to do, so he is the soldier. He is very much liked by everyone, but he will not take crap from anybody. If you’re stepping out of line... he’ll put you back in your place.

“Then back to Mark, he’s the dark sheep of the brothers. Before I knew he was a clone and a Castor, I always saw him as a lost boy, someone who was always searching for a family that he never had, and then he found it with the Proletheans and the Johanssens, and discovered the path that they wanted to go on with Gracie. That’s where he wanted to go. Throughout the second season up to when they elope at the end, he was always taking steps towards a simple life. Now that we’re coming to Season Three and the revelation that he is part of Project Castor, his brothers are going to make it very difficult for him to get what he wants... and if he can he would love to leave it all behind.”

“**Mark and Rudy** are the ones that we really examine more and delve into in terms of their characters, and we take them on a journey throughout the season,” says Appleyard. “The show is really about the sisters, the Clone Club, and these are kind of the new enemies of Season Three. We



RUDY MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE OLDER BROTHER. HE PEACOCKS AROUND. HE’S CERTAINLY VERY ALPHA...
ARI MILLEN

Season Three ended with Helena being handed over to the military by Mrs S.



Rudy, aka Scarface, is sure to shake things up for the Clone Club.



CLONE WARS THE MANY FACES OF TATIANA MASLANY



Sarah Manning
(1.01)

Punk-rock mum with a dark past. Leader and protector of the sisterhood.



Beth Childs
(1.01)

Troubled cop with too much on her plate. Jumps in front of a train in episode one.



Sarah as Beth
(1.01)

Steals Beth’s life to escape an abusive ex. Gets caught up in clone drama.



Katja Obinger
(1.01)

A socialite with a briefcase and a bullet in her head, aka ‘The German’.



Sarah as Katja
(1.02)

Disguises herself to collect the briefcase and find out what the hell is going on.



Alison Hendrix
(1.02)

Uptight soccer mom with a mean streak. Can be found in rehab and the theatre.



Cosima Niehaus
(1.02)

Science prodigy, PhD student and evo-devo enthusiast. Gets sick and breaks hearts.



Helena
(1.03)

Ukrainian angel of death. Prolethean cult member. Likes jelly and Sarah.

ORPHAN BLACK

Brothers And Seestras



Sarah's foster brother Felix (Jordan Gavaris) will hopefully still have her back.

don't get to know them as much as we know our girls, but Mark and Rudy in particular are two characters that will get to evolve. So just when we thought we knew who our enemies were, suddenly these new clones [are introduced], highly trained male soldiers. The journey with the male clones actually helps the sisters move forward with their own answers in different ways."

Millen and Appleyard both agree that one of the key themes, if not *the* key theme of Season Three, is family: what defines family, the challenges and joys associated with family, and how far you would go to protect your own. Where Sarah, Helena, Cosima and Alison are only just discovering they are family, the Castors have grown up together and built a family unit long ago.

"We have the clone sisterhood going on their shared journey trying to discover who created them and get to the bottom of the introduction of the male clones in their lives, and figure out why they exist and who they are in relation to them," Appleyard tells us. "You'll see the male family and female family give each other answers."

"In Season One and Two, a lot of questions were asked," says Millen. "The world kept expanding, and we didn't know what this was, and I think the great thing about this season is that we're finally going to start getting answers... and of course, with that more questions will be asked. But... we'll be closer to the answer."

"Certainly the first few seasons, the cliffhanger endings were about expanding the plot and creating this whole new aspect. Every year they try to outdo themselves, and obviously create buzz for the next season. Season Three is going to be a huge shock. Actually, there is more than one. There are multiple shockers that happen in the last episode, so it's going to be a fun one!"

"What's great about the show is that they never just want to sit back and go with what they've done. I think they are always trying to do bigger and more interesting things, and with the introduction of Castor they now have a lot more opportunities. They really are pulling out all the stops."

Does that mean there will be more clone dance party-like scenes to look forward to? "I don't think anyone wants to see me dance!" laughs Millen. "But there certainly are some pretty magical and beautiful things, and technically mind-blowing and frustrating. I wouldn't want to be the post-production guys. I think I heard something about the clone dance party. It took something like 500 man-hours! I'm sure one or two of the scenes will be the equivalent. They really go for it. For my money I think that will probably be the calling card of the show. Whenever you want to show off the show just show that scene. It's pretty incredible."

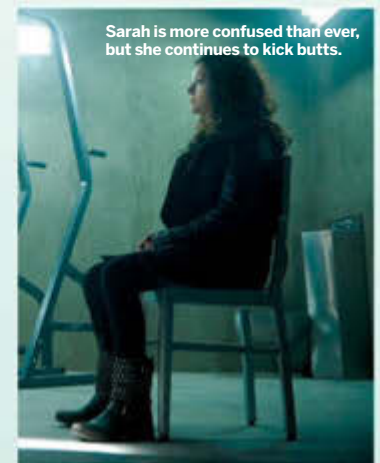
Orphan Black will air on BBC1 later in the year.



The Dyad Institute just loves to make things difficult for Project Leda.



The introduction of a clone brotherhood poses even more questions about Dyad.



Sarah is more confused than ever, but she continues to kick butts.



Alison as Sarah
(1.04)
Puts on her am-dram skills to visit Kira while her mum is out butt-kicking.



Sarah as Alison
(1.06)
Interrogates Donnie Hendrix, while Alison entertains guests.



Rachel Duncan
(1.10)
Head Clone In Charge. Project founder's daughter. Party pooper.



Helena as Sarah
(1.10)
Disguises herself to murder her and Sarah's mother.



Sarah as Cosima
(2.01)
Uses glasses and fierce eyeliner to infiltrate Dyad.



Jennifer Fitzsimmons
(2.03)
School teacher and swim coach. Defeated by illness.



Sarah as Alison
(2.07)
Attend rehab family day while Alison deals with Vic.



Tony Sawicki
(2.08)
Clone club's only boy. Kisses Felix. Looks oddly like his sister.



Rachel as Sarah
(2.09)
Adopts a punk rock grunge look to kidnap Kira for science.

Alex Mallari Jr.
is **Four**

Roger R. Cross
is **Six**

Anthony Lemke
is **Three**

LOST IN SPACE

WE GO ON THE SET OF STARGATE ALUMNI JOSEPH MALLOZZI AND PAUL MULLIE'S NEW SHOW DARK MATTER TO WITNESS THE REBIRTH OF THE TV SPACE OPERA

WORDS MICHAEL SIMPSON

A YEAR AFTER THE END OF BATTLESTAR GALACTICA AND THE FAILURE OF DEFYING GRAVITY, THE CANCELLATION OF STARGATE UNIVERSE IN 2010 SEEMED TO SIGNAL THE end of the space opera sub-genre. Fast-forward five years, and the excitement around *Guardians Of The Galaxy* and the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* revivals has made the cosmos cool again.

Leading the resurgence on TV is *Dark Matter*, which appropriately has long-time *Stargate* collaborators Joseph Mallozzi and Paul Mullie at the helm.

Adapted from their four-issue Dark Horse graphic novel, *Dark Matter* will be "super-serialised, character-driven and punctuated by action, visual effects and most importantly humour," according to Mallozzi when we dropped by the Toronto set.

Dark Matter is set around 200 years in the future. The story begins when the characters – six humans and one humanoid android – wake from stasis on a spaceship to find that they have no memory of who they are or how

they got there. So begins a voyage of personal discovery.

"There is a number of characters that you're getting wedded to and that you're getting invested in," says executive producer Jay Firestone, whose company, Prodigy Pictures, took on *Dark Matter* after producing five seasons of *Lost Girl*. "We introduce each one in a different episode. You're not going to get bored ever, because we're going to reveal something new about a different character in each episode."

DARK MATTER

Lost In Space

“I’M A FISH-OUT-OF-WATER; I DON’T
KNOW WHO I AM, I DON’T KNOW
WHERE I COME FROM, I DON’T
KNOW WHAT I’M DOING AND THE
THINGS THAT I TRY TO DO I’M
MORE-OR-LESS TERRIBLE AT

MARC BENDAVID

Melissa O’Neill
is **Two**

Marc Bendauid
is **One**

Jodelle Ferland
is **Five**

Zoie Palmer
is **Seven**

It sounds like *Dark Matter* won’t get off to a slow start like Mallozzi and Mullie’s last journey into space with *SGU*, then. That’s how Mallozzi likes it. “I’ve always been a big fan of those cable shows where shit happens,” he states. “In every episode there is some sort of progression either in terms of characters or the big story arc.”

Facilitating this approach will be a backdrop that we can relate to. “Corporations have gone out and seeded worlds to exploit their

resources, so they are the big players,” Mallozzi explains. “They are very powerful and they don’t always play by the rules. There’s also the Galactic Authority. They are the policing force and they ensure that the rule of law is met. Then there are the independent players, certain independent colonies that have won their freedom over time or where wealthy families have gone out and seeded planets.”

At Prodigy’s soundstages we’re given a tour of the standing sets for the

bridge, infirmary and corridors of the ship. There we meet the cast, including *Lost Girl*’s Anthony Lemke, who plays Three. As with other human members of the crew, Three’s real name is one of the season’s big mysteries. Lemke describes him as a “hothead” who looks great in snakeskin pants, but he doesn’t give much else away. “You’ll go an entire show thinking that I’m wrong and everyone’s beating up on me and clearly the decisions I’m making or pushing for are just bad decisions. Then at the end...”

there will be a little reveal that comes out where you are like, 'Oh, maybe that wasn't such a bad idea that he had.'"

Even more mysterious than Three is the character of One, played by Marc Bendavid. Going into the second half of the season, Bendavid is still uncertain about One's role on the ship. "Some characters know how to use tech gadgetry, computers and so on, another character knows how to fight proficiently, another has really advanced handling of weapons," he says. "We're in episode eight now, and by the time we get here we find out what everyone is good at except One."

Syfy's teaser trailer hints that at least some of the crew are 'dangerous'. This feeds into one of the show's key themes, Bendavid explains. "Things emerge to tell us that we were good, charitable people, and then things emerge to tell us that we were merciless mercenaries. We're in a situation where

“
THE WOMEN DO A LOT OF THE ASS KICKING. THERE'S A LOT OF GUNPLAY, A LOT OF SHIP, SOME MARTIAL ARTS, BUT IN TERMS OF REALLY COOL BUTT KICKING, THE WOMEN ROCK
”

JOE MALLOZZI

we can't remember any of that. There's the idea that if we were bad, is the possibility of redemption there, and if we were good, does it mean anything if we can't remember that we were good?"

Each character will experience an ongoing tug-of-war between an impulse to do the right thing and a desire to do bad. Taking control in such fractious circumstances will be the unlikely figure of Two, played by Melissa O'Neil.

"Two is essentially the leader on the ship," O'Neil states. "That's something that happens instinctively... I think it says something about how that must have been how it was in the past, because for whatever reason on this ship, which is charged with all sorts of characters and testosterone-filled men, they do listen to her... sometimes."

As a musical theatre actress and past winner of *Canadian Idol*, O'Neil hardly seems an obvious choice. Yet, her casting is on par with the showrunners'

aim to make the female characters a match for the men. "The women do a lot of the ass-kicking," Mallozzi explains. "There's a lot of gunplay, a lot of ship, some martial arts, but in terms of really cool butt-kicking, the women rock."

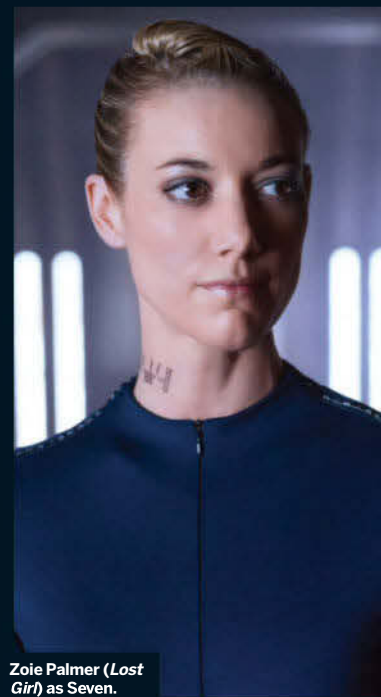
"*Dark Matter* will send a strong message about the equality of women," adds Firestone, who bemoans the negative response some viewers had to *Lost Girl*'s bisexual leading lady, Bo. Notwithstanding the writers' passion for this issue, however, Mallozzi promises that *Dark Matter* won't be preachy. "Within the sci-fi genre there needs to be a balance. *Stargate* was fun, but I don't see a lot of fun sci-fi. *Firefly* was fun. Darker sci-fi is beautiful and great but you look at *Guardians Of The Galaxy* – it was sci-fi fun. Basically, what sets our show apart is that it's fun." ✎

Dark Matter starts on Monday nights at 8pm on 15 June on Syfy.

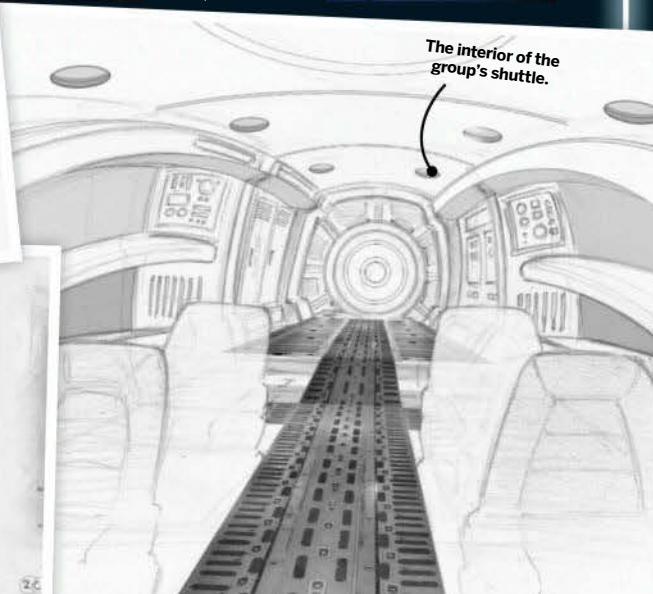
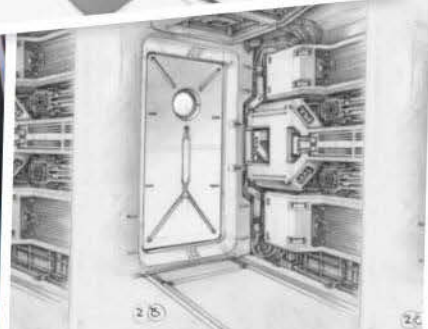
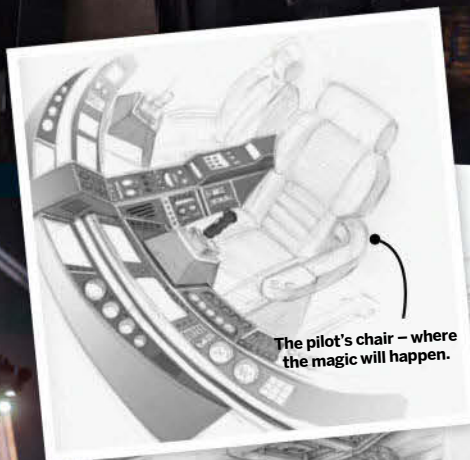


From left to right: Four (Alex Mallari Jr.), One (Marc Bendavid), Six (Roger Cross) and Three (Anthony Lemke).

Three wants you to say hello to his two little friends.



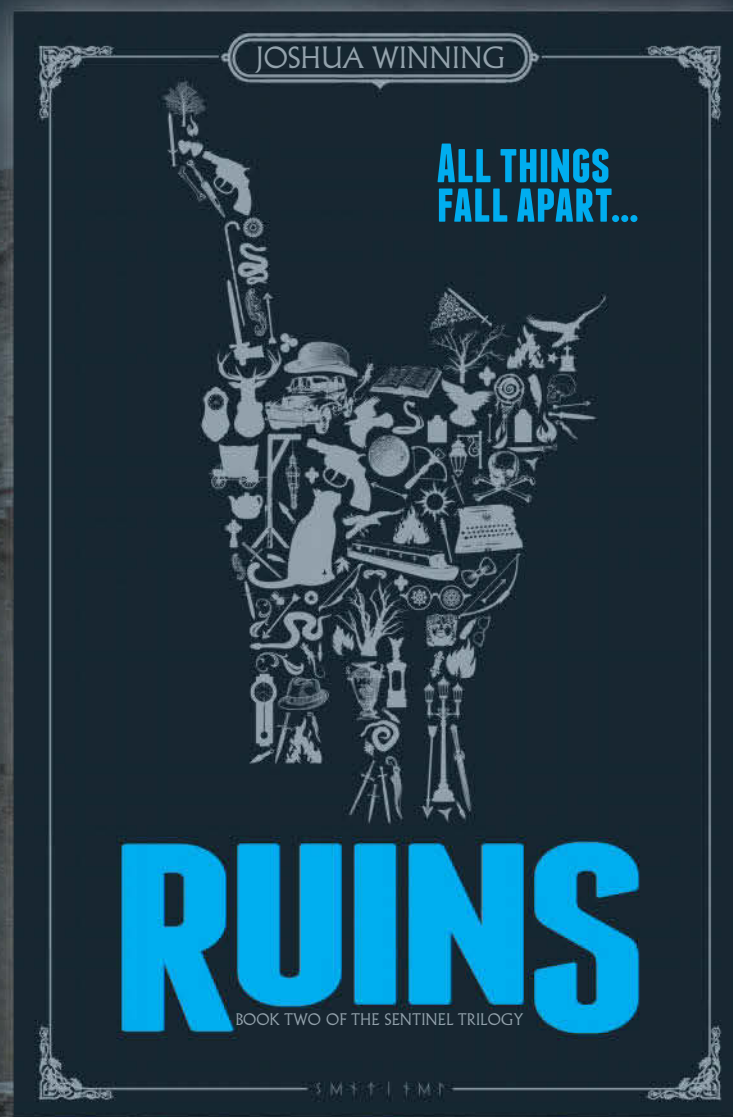
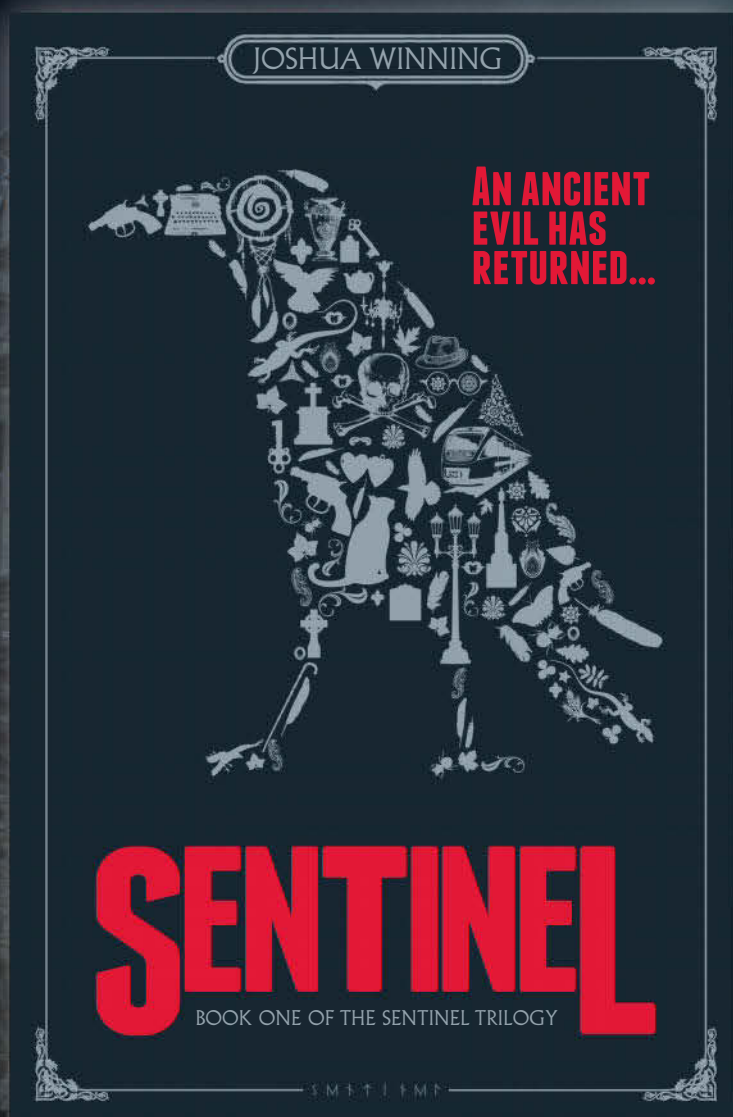
Zoie Palmer (*Lost Girl*) as Seven.



“HERE’S ONE FOR FANS OF TERRY PRATCHETT, EDGAR ALLAN POE AND TOLKIEN ... IT HAS EVERYTHING FANTASY READERS COULD WANT.”

CULTURE FLY

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IT MAY BE CATEGORISED AS SCI-FI, BUT THE WORLD OF HUMANS ISN'T AS FAR AWAY AS YOU MAY HAVE THOUGHT. WE FOUND OUT FROM THE CAST ON THE SET OF CHANNEL 4'S NEW DRAMA ABOUT WHY YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR...

WORDS ABIGAIL CHANDLER ILLUSTRATIONS REBEKKA HEARL



IN A LARGE, TASTEFULLY DECORATED HOME IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, A FAMILY SIT DOWN TO LUNCH. THEY'RE JUST YOUR AVERAGE FAMILY – A LITTLE BETTER LOOKING, PERHAPS, AND

affluent enough to afford what seems to be an au pair, but otherwise you wouldn't look at them twice. So you'd never notice that the au pair is a robot.

Well, she isn't, of course. She's *Sherlock* actress Gemma Chan. But in the world of *Humans*, Channel 4's major new sci-fi series, she is a Synthetic Human, aka a Synth. Synths are just "another household appliance, like a toaster," in Tom Goodman-Hill's words, the actor who plays father of the family Joe. Imagine if Siri could do the washing up.

So if you could have a completely human-looking piece of technology in your home, raising your children and never sleeping, would you? And what problems would that create?

Those are the questions asked in *Humans*, and the cast have been asking them since shooting started. So we settled down to talk technophobia with the cast.

"It's not sci-fi anymore!" laughs *The IT Crowd*'s Katherine Parkinson, who plays Joe's wife Laura. "I think that's why [*Humans*] feels so current and terrifying, because it's happening."

"For me," says *Utopia* actor Neil Maskell, who plays Detective Sergeant Pete Drummond, "The series isn't so much 'What if there were robots?' It's more like 'What if the robots that we already have looked like humans?' Your iPhone to some

extent is a form of AI, and we're dealing with it on a day-to-day basis."

Humans is set in a parallel present, a "hyper-real" world exactly like ours, but with the addition of Synths. Some of them are NHS carers, some are home-help models, and inevitably, there are the sexbots. "There's a sex-robot hotel in Korea right now. It's happening!" laughs *Merlin*'s Colin Morgan, who plays the mysterious Leo.

If our conversations with the cast are anything to go by, this is a show that will get you thinking – and possibly make you afraid of your own phone.

"We already anthropomorphise Roombas, the hoovers" Morgan laughs. "If you go to Amazon and read people's reviews, it's not 'The Roomba does this' it's 'He's great, I love him, he does this...' They're already attributing human qualities... So when these things are in your life and they're giving you the impression of love and the impression of doing things for you, what does that do to you?"

"I think it was Stephen Hawking who recently said that if you do get a proper artificial intelligence, they will overtake





mankind,” Morgan continues. “We evolved over millions of years; they evolved over maybe decades. Such a fast period of time. I think it’s scary that that technology, if it could develop itself, it would out-develop us.”

Humans is a British version of the Swedish show *Real Humans*, and although it covers many stories (including William Hurt as the man who helped invent Synths), the drama really kicks off when Joe decides to buy a Synth to help take the weight off his overwhelmed wife Laura.

If there’s discord between Joe and Laura, then it’s not visible in Parkinson and Goodman-Hill. They have an easy, married-couple chemistry, finishing each other’s thoughts and teasing each other’s answers.

“[Joe’s] just thinking of it as getting a new dishwasher,” Goodman-Hill says, “it doesn’t occur to him that there’s another woman in the house... It makes Joe and Laura look inwards the moment that they come out of everything else.”

“Which is the central idea of the whole argument,” Goodman-Hill continues. “If you take away human activity you’re left with an existential crisis.”

There’s something very strange about discussing murderous AI and existential crises in the innocuous setting of a teenage girl’s bedroom. Below us, outside the window, a mix of uniformed and plain-clothed police officers, all part of Drummond’s Special Technologies Task Force, mill about on the front lawn. Inside, it’s all minutely realised domesticity. Outside, darker things are creeping in. It feels like a metaphor for the whole show.

“At the beginning of the series the work is quite boring,” Maskell says about Drummond’s police force. “It’s mainly Synths that have been vandalised or smashed up or stolen.” He describes Drummond as “quite a thwarted man” who is drowning in technology that he doesn’t want.

Maskell is clearly interested in the issues raised by the show, and how the characters treat Synths. He’s also alarmingly insightful: the sort of man you could put the world to rights with over a pint.

“Historically, during the slave trade,” he says, “people were dehumanised. And what you see [in *Humans*] is a modern-day reflection of that, or evocation of that, that I think raises difficult moral questions about our own complicity in the slave trade that’s existing today. Is the person who made your Gap t-shirt a real human being like you are? Do they have feelings like you do? Because whether you like it or not, you’re switching

“

IF YOU GET A PROPER ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, THEY WILL OVERTAKE MANKIND

COLIN MORGAN

”

that bit of your own humanity and empathy off to just get that t-shirt for a tenner.”

According to Morgan, his Leo is “a hunted man, he’s a man on the run, a man on a mission. He comes from a very troubled, complicated past, which becomes clear as the series goes on. There are a lot of questions over him, there are a lot of question marks for him, and that’s a huge part of what his drive is, to get answers. He needs to know who he is.” Morgan looks like he’s been running, pairing heavy stubble with a stained hoodie and sweat-damp hair. Only his smile reminds you that it’s just a costume, and he’s not really a fugitive.

Gemma Chan’s Synth Anita is almost as closely shrouded in secrecy as Leo is.

One of the more recognisable names among the cast is William Hurt.



Merlin star Colin Morgan and Ivanno Jeremiah also feature.



The *IT Crowd*’s Katherine Parkinson plays a mother and wife with a Synth in her household.

"She's really an enigma when you first meet her," Chan says. "I think quite quickly the audience will think things aren't quite as they seem with her... You don't know if she's a threat to the family or if she's got her own agenda. It's been really interesting to play. There's lots of levels. There's what's going on on the surface, but there's a lot of other things going on beneath which will be revealed later in the series."

For Chan, the series posed a whole host of difficulties that the 'human' cast didn't have to deal with. Luckily, she had Synth School to teach her how to be a robot. "These things are ultimately machines and they run on battery power, so every movement has to have an economy and a grace to it. Just

things like putting down a glass. We'd put it down and maybe not take the shortest route, whereas one of these things just putting down a glass would take the direct route and it would have to land perfectly because these things have perfect eye sight, there'd be no wobbling of the glass." She can switch into Synth mode eerily quickly, demonstrating moves in a way that immediately sets off alarm bells in your head, telling you that you're looking at something not quite right.

Goodman-Hill was certainly impressed by the "mind-blowing" robot acting in the show, saying with relief that there were no "cocked heads and all that nonsense."

"It creates something much more real and spookier," Parkinson agrees.

Realism seems to be the key word for the show, despite all the robots. "I'd say it's not traditional sci-fi," Chan says. "It's very real, it's very grounded, there's humour, there's warmth, and there's also elements of thriller in it... in the same way that something like *The Walking Dead* has zombies in it, but the zombies are the least of it. It's about the struggle for existence really, and how people are getting along in this world... it's very much about [the Synths] and how we're getting on and what it means to be human."

So what can we expect? Maskell gives it some thought. "It is an exciting and compelling bit of sci-fi, if that's what you're looking for, it has philosophical and humanitarian questions that are raised by it, and it opens up debate. It works on both levels," he cringes, "to use a phrase I hate."

New drama *Humans* is coming to Channel 4 this June.



Hopefully *Humans* will fill the gap left on Channel 4 by *Utopia*.



Gemma Chan describes the series as 'traditional sci-fi'.



Actor Tom Goodman-Hill likens Synths in this reality to a "household appliance".

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR FRIEND IS A ROBOT

HERE'S A HANDY GUIDE TO DISCERNING WHETHER ONE OF YOUR NEAREST AND DEAREST IS, IN FACT, AI



1 ASK THEM TO DO SOMETHING RIDICULOUS

Robots are designed to be loyal to the point of subservience. With this in mind, ask them to do something crazy. If they are human they will tell you where to go.

As seen in: *Bicentennial Man*



2 MAKE HIM TAKE THE VOIGHT-KAMPPF TEST

Als will never tell you they aren't human. Avoid this possibility by making them take the Voight-Kampff test to tell biology from bullshit.

As seen in: *Blade Runner*



3 SEE IF THEY BLEED

Robots don't bleed. Try accidentally/on purpose cutting them on the arm. If they're a robot, he'll bleed milk (we hope it's milk). If it's blood, then you have some apologising to do.

As seen in: *Alien*



4 PERFORM AN ELABORATE STRIPEASE

Yes, you read correctly. Certain types of robots can't commute with overt displays of virility. Before long heads will be exploding all over the shop.

As seen in: *Austin Powers*



5 ATTACK WITH ROBOTS

Robots see other robots as equals. Any sane person will run to the hills when faced with a homicidal robot. If they stand still, then they're not real.

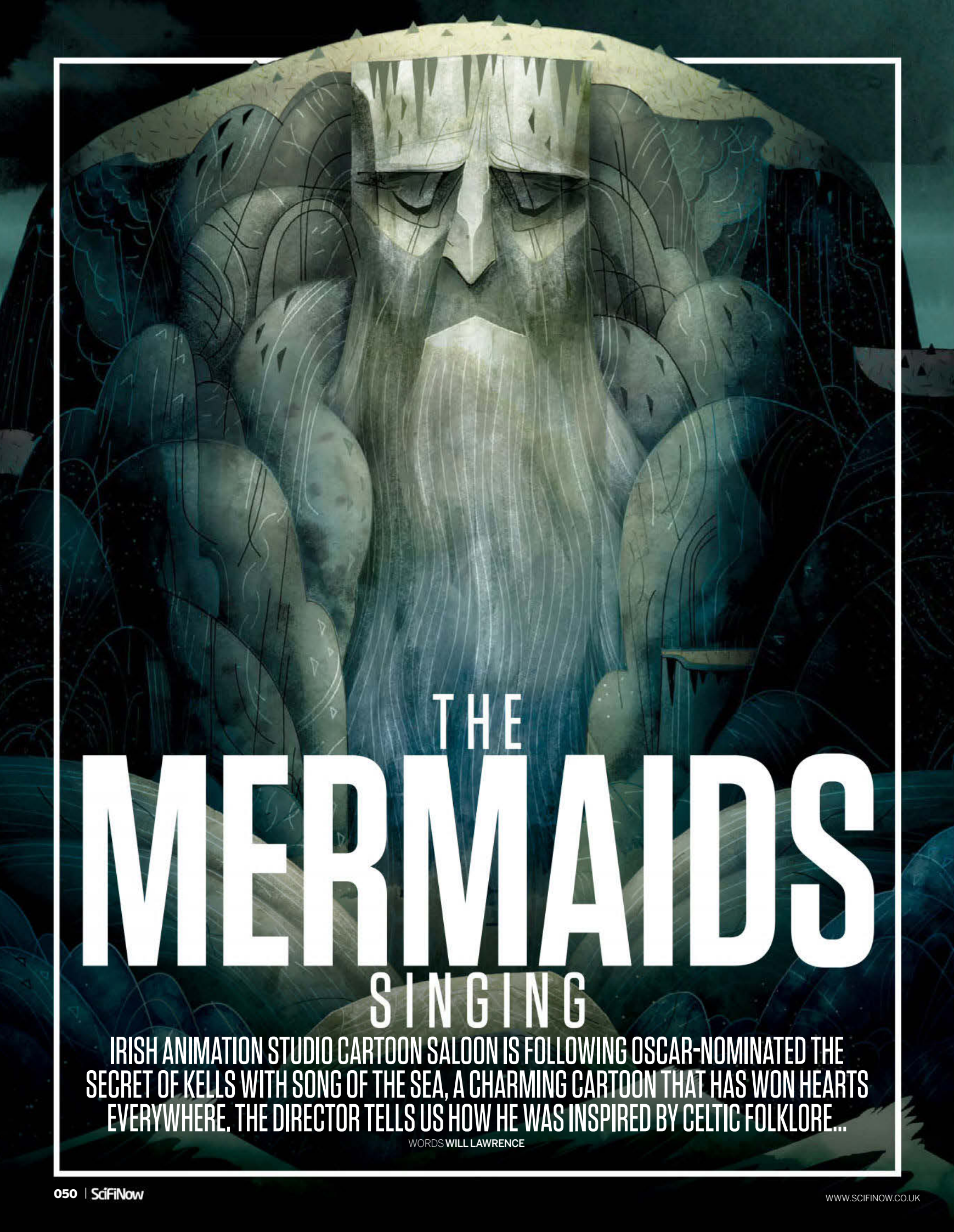
As seen in: *Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey*



6 LOOK FOR LOOKALIKES

Creating robots is a lengthy and expensive business, so they won't look too different. One way of telling if your friend is a robot is if they have a strangely large amount of lookalikes.

As seen in: *Battlestar Galactica*



THE MERMAIDS SINGING

IRISH ANIMATION STUDIO CARTOON SALOON IS FOLLOWING OSCAR-NOMINATED THE SECRET OF KELLS WITH SONG OF THE SEA, A CHARMING CARTOON THAT HAS WON HEARTS EVERYWHERE. THE DIRECTOR TELLS US HOW HE WAS INSPIRED BY CELTIC FOLKLORE...

WORDS WILL LAWRENCE



IT IS CURIOUS THAT A THING OF BEAUTY CAN BE BORN OF TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER, BUT SUCH IS THE CASE WITH THE OSCAR-NOMINATED ANIMATED FILM SONG OF THE SEA. THE SECOND

feature from Irish artist and animator Tomm Moore, the movie looks set to enchant adults and children alike, even though it was inspired by a horrific discovery — a bloody, real-life seal cull.

Moore was holidaying in the Dingle peninsula, Ireland's most westerly region, and one day he visited a beach with his young son. "My son suddenly said, 'Look dad, an alien head!' I thought he was making it up, but I looked up and saw a decomposing seal skull in the surf," says Moore.

It was then that the enormity of the horror struck home. "I saw the seal's body, and its head had been chopped off. Then I noticed dead seals all over the beach."

He mentioned the cull to a local woman. "She said the fishermen were blaming the seals for the falling fish stock," he explains. "And she talked about how there was a superstition around seals that had ensured that they were always protected. She said that fisherman believed the seals contained the souls of people who had been lost at sea."

"Celtic folklore was the water I was swimming in during my childhood," he says, "though it wasn't deliberate." His uncle, Kieran Goss, is a renowned singer-songwriter, and musicians often passed through his family home, bringing with them Gaelic songs and traditions.

"When I got into filmmaking, I was more immersed in American pop culture," Moore continues, "but then I saw *The Power Of Myth* [a 1988 PBS documentary] with Joseph Campbell, that made me realise a lot of the stuff I loved was drawn from a well of myth."

"That in turn made me appreciate Irish folklore, because that was actually a starting point rather than something fusty and dusty that needed to be discarded."

Like many kids at the time, Moore was a devotee of the original *Star Wars* trilogy, and was a fan of the British cult comic 2000 AD. "*The Power Of Myth* opened my eyes to the fact that there's stuff in *The Empire Strikes Back*, like the idea of going into the cave and facing your own subconscious fears."

"I thought, 'Wow, there's much more to this stuff.' So I started looking at films, comics and all the stuff I loved through that lens. That has continued through 'til now."

WE HIT ON THE WIZARD OF OZ AND PETER PAN IDEA, WHERE EVERYTHING IN THE FAIRY TALE WORLD WAS A REFLECTION OF THE KIDS' WORLD

TOMM MOORE

Selkies, it should be noted, are something different: sea-women who are born as seals, but shed their skins and live among humans. Moore then noticed their prevalence in David Thomson's folklore compilation *The People Of The Sea* and, combining this with his memories of the seal cull, struck upon the narrative for *Song Of The Sea*.

"I realised that there was a lot more to these stories than just fairy tales," he says. "They actually bonded people to their landscape, and there was a lot of respect for the environment that came through this."

"A lot of the stories in *The People Of The Sea* were dealing with the fact that people often lost loved ones in fishing communities. It was a rough life. And so I thought there was something in that that would still be very relevant to my son's generation and hopefully to generations after that."

Moore has a deep-rooted interest in Celtic myth and legend. His first feature, 2009's *The Secret Of Kells*, is also awash with Celtic motifs. Like *Song Of The Sea*, it earned an Oscar nomination and has an impressive cast; Brendan Gleeson stars in both films.

Indeed, *Song Of The Sea* has a number of folklore motifs and characters. Manannán mac Lir and Macha figure prominently, though Moore applies his own interpretation, using them to reflect people and events in the human world. In Irish myth, Macha is an otherworldly woman from the Ulster Cycle, often regarded as a mother goddess and, as Mór-Ríoghain, a goddess of war.

In *Song Of The Sea*, she is Mac Lir's mother and the story's antagonist, appearing as an owl-witch who steals the emotions of magical beings and renders them into stone. All these emotions are stashed away in bottles, and it is up to a boy called Ben and his selkie sister to restore order.

"The first drafts were bloated with mythology," says Moore, "we had to pare it back to the story of a family. Then we hit on *The Wizard Of Oz* and *Peter Pan* idea, where everything in the fairy tale world was a direct reflection of the kids' world. It all clicked together, and I think it works."



Song Of The Sea will be released in cinemas on 10 July.

Ben's selkie sister takes centre stage — much to his annoyance.



When his selkie mother returns to the deep, his grief imprisons him.



The hero's journey carries him to a wonderfully long-haired storyteller.



Young Ben revels in his mother's love before she leaves the family behind.





FATEFUL

THE

EIGHT

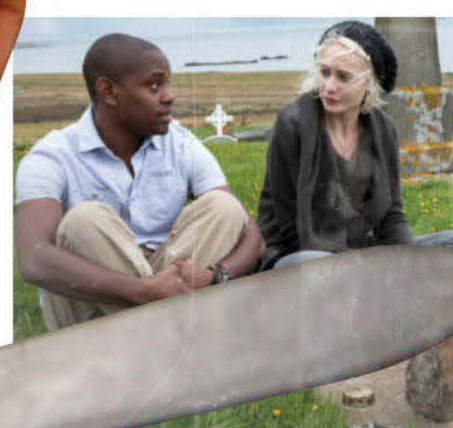
WORDS
POPPY-JAY
PALMER



The mysterious Mr
Whispers stalks
the Sensates.



A chain reaction
occurs after a
bullet in the head.



THE WACHOWSKIS
DROPPED THE BALL WITH
JUPITER ASCENDING
EARLIER THIS YEAR,
BUT **COULD THEIR NEW
NETFLIX SERIES BE
ENOUGH TO GET BACK
THEIR CRED AS SCIENCE
FICTION ARTISTS?** WE
TALK TO THE CAST ABOUT
WHY YOU DEFINITELY NEED
TO WATCH SENSE8...

WE
ARE
IN

REYKJAVIK

IT'S AUGUST, BUT IT'S FREEZING

cold. The cast of Netflix's new sci-fi series *Sense8* are filming a scene for the finale on a boat docked in the harbour. They're all dressed in vest tops and cardigans, and Doona Bae is visibly shaking on the monitor we're watching from, having to be wrapped in a blanket between takes. Cut is called, and Lana Wachowski's pink hair leads the cast over for a quick snack break, then it's back on the boat and out to sea. They are stalked by a helicopter, which is getting some nice overhead shots while the sunset's still spectacular. The temperature drops some more, so we leave for the night, but the cast stays on the water until the sun goes down.

It's hard to feel sorry for them, though. Reykjavik is just one stop on their global tour. Netflix spares no expenses. When we talk to the cast, *Sense8* has already done San Francisco and Chicago, and has Nairobi, Berlin, Mexico City, Mumbai and Seoul still to go: eight cities for eight cast members and eight Sensates.

The first trailer – which gained more than 3 million views in three days – doesn't reveal too much about the setup. It's all about connections and relationships you build with other people. It's also sci-fi, which is where the Sensate thing comes in. After a series of migraines and strange experiences, eight diverse strangers from around the world suddenly become psychically linked: a cop from Chicago with a dark past; an Icelandic DJ with a questionable future; a happy-go-lucky Kenyan bus driver; a businesswoman/cage fighter from South Korea; a Mexican actor struggling with his sexuality; a trans political blogger/hackivist from San Francisco; a religious but troubled Mumbai pharmacist, and a surly safe-cracker from Berlin. It takes at least the first episode to fully get to grips with it.

We're in Reykjavik for Riley the DJ, played by Tuppence Middleton. Riley's story initially starts in London, having emigrated when she was young. After getting caught up in underground music, drugs and this whole Sensate business, Riley finally finds herself back in her native country.

"When I found out I'd be Icelandic, I went to a dialect coach. They said, 'Whatever you

do, don't listen to Bjork!'" says Middleton. After *Jupiter Ascending*, this is her second time working with the Wachowskis, *Sense8*'s writers, directors and creators.

"It's the first time [the Wachowskis have] done television, which is really exciting," she tells us. "You can really feel that film knowledge when you're working with them on set. It's very unique. They are very free, the way they direct. It's a process for them... It's a very organic way of working. They're always laughing and they've been doing crazy hours on this, they must be exhausted! I can't imagine that they sleep. They go home from set, write, have a coffee and then come back to set again, I'm sure!"

The first character we really get to know, Angel (played by Daryl Hannah), isn't one of the eight. She's a Sensate from an older generation, and her suicide at the start of the pilot is what gets the whole story going.

"To me, the show is almost impossible to describe, because it's so unusual," Hannah says. "There's so much interconnectedness, and the aspects of that which we are almost unaware of, and they tell it with all these incredible, diverse characters who start recognising that they can see the same things, smell the same things, taste the same things. Let me just say this: it's going to be incredibly controversial, because it deals with every issue that we deal with on a regular basis: religion, race, sexuality, violence, gender, drugs... I think that's going to create a lot of conversation. But it's entertaining, it's really exciting.

"They have so much creative freedom on this project, and they're really taking advantage of that in the way that you hope to as an artist, and I really believe that Lana and Andy are incredible artists. It's really inspiring to watch them work... They have created this whole thing, and they are really the authors of it. It's in their imagination, so we're going into their heads!"

"You could only do this on Netflix," says Brian J Smith, who plays police officer Will from Chicago. "I think every other network would say, 'You can't do this, you're breaking every single rule! You can't shoot a television show in seven different countries. It's not

Wachowski family

Meet those who have stuck with the *Sense8* creators

KEY

- THE MATRIX
- THE MATRIX RELOADED
- THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
- V FOR VENDETTA
- SPEED RACER
- NINJA ASSASSIN
- CLOUD ATLAS
- JUPITER ASCENDING

Grant Hill

(*Sense8*: producer)

Hill's other film producing credits include *The Tree Of Life*, *Titanic* and *The Thin Red Line*.



James McTeigue

(*Sense8*: director)

McTeigue's next film will be spy thriller *Survivor*, starring Milla Jovovich and Pierce Brosnan.



Doona Bae

(*Sense8*: actor)

In *Cloud Atlas*, Bae played six characters, including Sonmi-451, Tilda Ewing and Megan's Mom.



Dan Glass

(*Sense8*: director, visual effects supervisor)

Glass is chief creative officer of Method Studios, but this is his first directing credit.



John Toll

(*Sense8*: cinematographer)

Toll worked on *Iron Man 3*, *The Adjustment Bureau*, *Braveheart* and the pilot of *Breaking Bad*.



Hugh Bateup

(*Sense8*: production designer)

Bateup also worked with Bryan Singer as the supervising art director on *Superman Returns*.



Damien Drew

(*Sense8*: art director)

He was draftsman on *Attack Of The Clones* and assistant art director on *Revenge Of The Sith*.



Peter Walpole

(*Sense8*: supervising set decorator)

Walpole decorated the set for the first five episodes of *Doctor Who* Series One.



possible!' And I think that's kind of why they want to do it. We're all figuring it out as we go along, and it's really exciting."

Being a man of the sci-fi cloth (he starred in *Stargate Universe* for two years), Smith is certain there's nothing like *Sense8*. "I've never read anything like it, I've never seen anything like it... it's completely original. [The Wachowskis] love to tell long-form stories. You've got eight different storylines that reflect each other and intertwine.

They're artists! You can't have 15 people on set going, 'What are you doing? That's not Standards and Practices!' They'd be like, 'What are you talking about? This is what we feel! This is the story we're trying to tell!'"

There are a couple of genre veterans in the cast, the most well known being Naveen Andrews (Sayid from *Lost*) as Jonas, another Sensate from Angel's generation. Andrews is confident that if you liked *Lost*, *Sense8* will blow your mind. "At the risk of offending Damon [Lindelof, *Lost*'s producer] or anyone of those fuckers, it has a lot more depth. It's far more daring! We can get away with so much more on fucking Netflix than you ever could with Disney."

After what felt like a dry spell for the Wachowskis, what with various release dates



The Sensates form unbreakable bonds all over the world.



being pushed back and *Jupiter Ascending* being slated critically, *Sense8* really could be what turns it all around.

Doona Bae, who plays Sun, the hotshot Seoul businesswoman and part-time cage fighter, has worked with the Wachowskis three times, and really got to know them since starring in *Cloud Atlas* in 2012.

"Andy and Lana remind me of a tree. Andy is like the trunk or roots, and Lana is like leaves or flowers," she explains. "Lana makes shade and light, and she leads the atmosphere. Andy is very powerfully focused. Sometimes they are like one person. When they shoot they just look at each other then shout 'Okay' or not. I sometimes say they are like one person with two brains."



The Wachowskis are changing the game: where their films were CGI-heavy, *Sense8* is green-screen-free. Everything you see is real, which is why they travelled the world.

"[It's more natural], but... you have to travel to a city just for one scene. I have to go to Mumbai for one line," says Bae.

"I went to San Francisco only for a kiss!" says Miguel Ángel Silvestre. Silvestre is one

of the eight, a famous actor from Mexico named Lito. Like the rest of the characters, Lito has a secret: he's in a same-sex relationship that he's trying to keep hidden, but his new psychic links could threaten to out him.

"I think it's brave and real, because they are not hiding the dark side of the human being, or the light side," says Silvestre. "It speaks about common things, which is sex, which is why we hide, which is who we really are when we're alone and who we really are when we put on the mask in front of other people. What happens when you see who you really are and you try to follow that? You try to be more modest and real in life and sharing, so I could say that it's sci-fi, but it's sci-fi that could happen to you. You're going to see shots that are very interesting for the eye, but at the same time you're going to feel very close to the characters, because [their experiences] could happen to you."

It's reassuring to hear how confident the cast are that *Sense8* will be spectacular. Jamie Clayton, who plays Nomi the blogger from San Francisco, thinks that it's partly down to Netflix. "They're reshaping the industry," she explains. "It's like reinventing lipstick. Like, shit, lipstick's been around forever! Netflix

Daryl Hannah's Angel is an enigma that just won't go away.



Riley (Tuppence Middleton) and Will (Brian J Smith) connect.

is the new punk rock. Everyone is in a full goddamn panic, because it's like the new girl at school and she's in the hottest outfit and all the guys want to sleep with her and all the other girls want to be her, and it's like 'Shit, how do we do that?'"

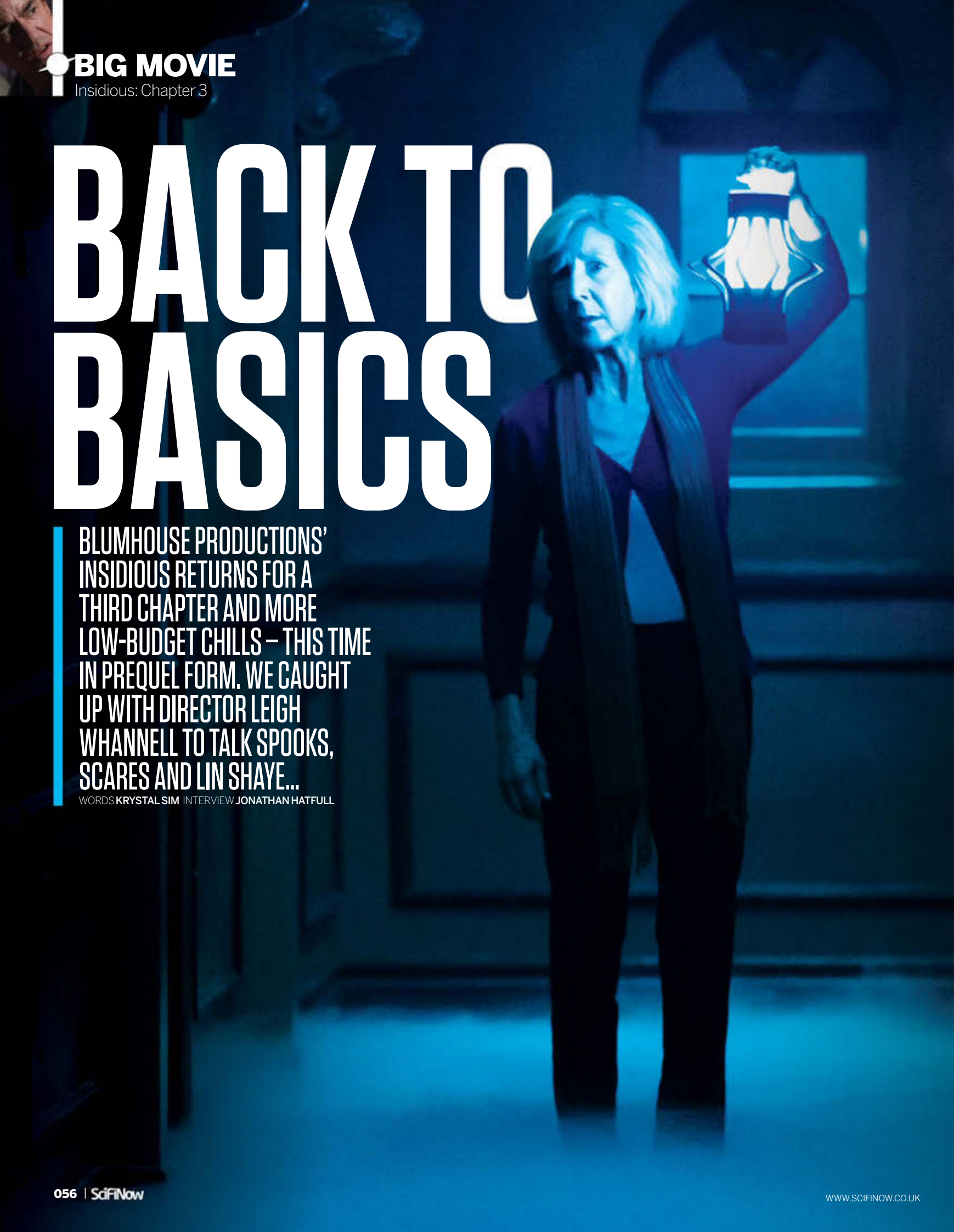
Like Nomi, Clayton is a trans woman in real life, which is a reason she was so keen to get the role. "When I read the script I was like, 'Oh my god, if I don't get this part, whoever does better do a really fucking good job because I'm going to watch this!'"

"For me, the representation that they've cultivated on this show, the characters, the people, the lives that they're living, the people that they are in love with, the friends that they have and the places that they live, the diversity within that and the diversity with the locations and everything, that's something that I've never seen on television, and I don't know if I even thought that I would see it. I don't think that there's anyone that could hit play on this and not feel connected to one person or another. There's someone or some place that everyone can be like, 'Oh my god, I've felt that or I've been there or I've done that.'"

Sense8 will air on Netflix from 5 June.



IT'S BRAVE... THEY ARE NOT HIDING THE DARK SIDE OF THE HUMAN BEING
MIGUEL ÁNGEL SILVESTRE



BIG MOVIE

Insidious: Chapter 3

BACK TO BASICS

BLUMHOUSE PRODUCTIONS' INSIDIOUS RETURNS FOR A THIRD CHAPTER AND MORE LOW-BUDGET CHILLS – THIS TIME IN PREQUEL FORM. WE CAUGHT UP WITH DIRECTOR LEIGH WHANNELL TO TALK SPOOKS, SCARES AND LIN SHAYE...

WORDS KRYSTAL SIM INTERVIEW JONATHAN HATFULL



HORROR IS NO PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY. JUST ASK THE LAMBERTS – THE POOR, UNFORTUNATE SOULS AT THE HEART OF *INSIDIOUS* AND IT'S 2013 SEQUEL. WHILE *Insidious: Chapter 2* may have wrapped up their story, the shock on ghostly psychic Elise Rainer's (Lin Shaye) face at the end teased a future for the series.

"Making a film is like having a child," says scriptwriter and actor Leigh Whannell. "It's this huge push uphill. It's a very difficult, very long process. When you get to the end of it you just want to step away for a minute, and it's usually the producers who bring up the conversation about sequels before you're ready."

Since then, filmmaking partner James Wan has hopped genres with blockbuster *Furious 7*, leaving Whannell to take up the reins as director – a role he was initially hesitant to take on.

"[James] was pretty much unavailable to make *Insidious: Chapter 3*, but everyone at Blumhouse wanted to make another film. And so I guess I was the natural choice being the writer

at the centre of the story, and bringing Elise back helped shape the movie

"A ghost film is about death. And on one side of it it's a hopeful thing; even if a film's scary, if it deals with ghosts then it's saying that there's life after death. I just thought this would be an interesting way to explore losing people. Once it was decided that the Lambert family wasn't going to be involved, I thought that [Lin] was the only natural choice. Unfortunately we killed her off in the first movie..."

"If I had set the film after the second she would have been a ghost, and I just didn't want to do that. That would have been a whole other level of writing that didn't interest me. We have plenty of ghosts but they're the bad guys. They're the ones you keep in the background. I think it kind of dilutes the power of a haunted house film to have a ghost as one of the main characters."

Whannell says that he and Wan both love horror, and subverting its tropes in their work. So will *Chapter 3* go back to the franchise's weirder roots?



Thanks to prequel rules, the great Lin Shaye returns as Elise Rainier.



Leigh Whannell makes his directorial debut in this third chapter.

ONE THING JAMES AND I WANTED TO DO WITH THE FIRST *INSIDIOUS* IS REACT, IN OUR OWN SMALL WAY, TO SOME OF THE TROPES

LEIGH WHANNELL

of the previous two. They asked me and I kind of paused. It wasn't that I didn't want to direct – I've always wanted to direct a film eventually, but I didn't know if I wanted it to be that one."

"I thought at that moment it would be stupid to turn down a film that was guaranteed to play in theatres. It was during the writing that it really clicked for me...towards the end of the first draft I was thinking 'my god, I can't believe I was thinking of letting somebody else do this. I don't want somebody else to mess this up.'"

Billed as "the darkest chapter" yet, *Insidious: Chapter 3* is set before the events of the first two movies. While recovering from a traffic accident and grieving for her dead mother, Quinn Brenner (Stefanie Scott) reaches out to the spirit world and psychic Elise. However, instead of making contact with her dearly departed mum, she attracts the attention of a sinister spectre – The Man Who Can't Breathe, who joins a fine tradition of oddly named *Insidious* antagonists, stretching back to the Lipstick-Face Demon.

Whannell says that during writing he came to realise that grief should be

"I wouldn't say we're snobbish, but we're kind of picky about [horror]," he tells us. "We want to hold horror to the same standard that other genres get held to and it seems as though there are a lot of horror films being made by people who don't take the genre as seriously or aren't as respectful of the genre. One thing James and I wanted to do with the first *Insidious* is react, in our own small way, to some of the tropes we thought had become so shop-worn and predictable..."

"I came up with the idea for the gas mask that Elise uses. I thought it was kind of David Lynch-y and weird and something that we haven't seen before. You can cop some flak for that. It's safer to walk the middle ground but when James and I work together, we just can't help but not do that."

"I think this film has its own distinct personality separate from the first two. It's still in the same world and the same universe, but because it's a different director I'd like to think that it feels a little bit different."



Insidious: Chapter 3 is out in cinemas on 5 June.

Ghouls 'n' Ghosts

The big bads of the *Insidious* universe



Lipstick-Face Demon

The Darth Maul lookalike demon from the first film was a classic example of less is more. The more we saw of ol' Fire Face, the less terrifying he became. Although thanks to him, you can probably never hear 'Tip Toe Through the Tulips' without shuddering.



The Bride in Black

The old woman who haunted Josh (Patrick Wilson) was unmasked as serial killer Parker Crane in *Insidious: Chapter 2*. Forced by his abusive mother to live as a girl during his childhood, in later life Crane took on the Bride in Black persona to murder his victims.



The Man Who Can't Breathe

This nameless entity is the black cloud hanging over *Insidious: Chapter 3*. Grieving for the loss of her mother, Quinn reaches out to contact her beyond the grave attracting this malevolent apparition's attentions with chilling consequences.

Feeding **HANNIBAL**

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL





HANNIBAL'S FOOD DESIGNER JANICE POON TELLS US ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF COOKING FOR CANNIBALS ON TV'S BEST-LOOKING SHOW

IF YOU'VE WATCHED HANNIBAL, YOU'LL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE SENSATION OF HUNGER AND REVULSION INTERTWINING: THE FORMER BECAUSE THE DISHES CREATED BY THE CHARMING

aesthete look delicious; the latter because we're all too aware what they're made of. Sometimes it looks very much like a gourmet

Hannibal's 'ethical butcher' is using.

"I can't tell you how many legs I roasted," laughs Janice Poon, the food designer on NBC's darkest hit. "And the thing that is really marvellous is when nobody questions it. When you take it to set and nobody says 'How did you fit that leg in the oven?' They just take it for granted! 'Oh yeah right, roast leg, perfect! Put it over there.' Which is really what you want, although it belies the six weeks of sweating and the three homeless men that gave it all for the shot! [laughs]

I'm like a tree falling in the forest, I tell ya! There are lots of legs in Season Three. That's what's for dinner: leg surprise!"

A tree falling in the forest is a very modest description of Poon's work on the show. Certainly, *Hannibal* has something of an embarrassment of visual riches, but the food has been an integral part of the show since the beginning, and has grown more ambitious as it progressed. "[Hannibal] sneaked up on me, as he will sneak up on everybody!" she tells us. "I

was actually not long retired from food styling, because I had decided I wanted to do something that didn't involve loading the car at 2am in some remote freezing location. I was writing books for little girls, and then the phone rang. It was a props master who said, 'I've heard you're the only person who can do the job, so I'm hoping that you will come out of retirement for this.' I thought food styling for a pilot for a cannibal show would just be a good shake-up for my brain, and of course, three years later I'm still up to my elbows in body parts."

Body parts are just a small part of the job. Like the rest of the show, the designs of the food are incredibly elaborate and ornate, helping to create *Hannibal*'s unique look. "Well, I'm a long-time embroiderer," Poon explains. "Give me an inch and I'll take a foot, or a mile. The food stylist role was very loosely defined, and in the very beginning everybody's just feeling everybody out and seeing how far everybody will go. I always like to push it as far as I can, because I think I'm not in it for the money, I'm not in it for the glory; I'm in it for the quality of the work. I just went at it, and I was sort of gobsmacked, because nobody ever said, 'Are you crazy? Stop that!' Everything that I did was just like, 'Oh great!' Like, 'What? They're going to let me put skulls on this stuff?' It seemed that it was never too much. I do get a lot of license to invent." ➤

INTERVIEW

Janice Poon

WITH THAT LICENSE to invent comes the challenge. *Hannibal* may look like a lavish movie, but the fact is that it is still working to a network TV schedule, with eight days allotted to the filming of each episode. "It's just like you're running all the time, so what difference does it make if you step it up a few paces?" she explains. "Especially when you're working with a team that's so creative, the changes will come in. Late. And you might find that what you thought was so when you went to bed is not so when you wake up! There have been script changes, your scene could have been entirely dropped, or a whole new scene could have been written and you have to come up with it, because the one thing for sure is that you can never say no. You cannot say, 'That's not possible'; you just have to come up with it."

THERE ARE LOTS OF LEGS IN SEASON 3. THAT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER, LEG SURPRISE!
JANICE POON

And it can be a challenge, because lots of the things that he's cooking are not easy to get! You can't just get them at the 7/11!"

It's difficult to imagine the 7/11 stocking Ortolan birds, the small Spanish songbirds that are illegal to eat, which Poon made from marzipan and dried spaghetti (for the bone crunch, of course).

Or the ingredients for the Kholodet, the clear jelly containing a 'Mobius strip' of anchovies. "Anchovies swimming in a Mobius strip makes me think of my mother turning to me and handing me a slotted spoon and saying, 'Janice, empty that lake out.' I'm proud of it in that it was an incredible challenge, and contrary to what the actors thought, it was a very good-tasting dish, but they couldn't get past the smell of the anchovies."

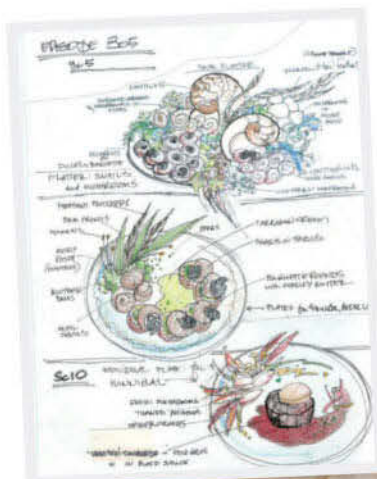
Poon tells us that creating something that the actors will enjoy eating is very important to her, especially as Mads Mikkelsen is one of the few who actually swallows his food (as opposed to spitting it out due to multiple takes). "I would say Mads Mikkelsen, because he's cooking, I'm most familiar with his on-set eating habits, and he's fantastic," Poon enthuses. "Not only will he eat all and everything, he's really keen about it. He'll come around to our on-set kitchen and see what we're making, and he takes great interest in it. I can't tell you how fantastic this crew is. Hugh Dancy, Mads Mikkelsen, Laurence Fishburne, they're wonderful. Mads jumps in and will take ownership of what's cooking and how it's going to be cooked. He'll say, 'Hannibal would do that *that* way.' It's all so very important to them. They're all very focused on the food."

Creating something tasty and beautiful aren't the only criteria. While some of the food in the show is exactly what it looks like (a side of roast beef, or a suckling pig), some of the food in the show is, well, exactly what it looks like. Even if it's not human flesh, raw meat presents issues. When Hannibal cooks up human lungs in the very first episode, Poon was faced with

a serious problem. "The script called for him to touch it like he's pressing the air out of the lung, and take his finger and lick it, like he's rubbed the lung and tasting it," she remembers. "I thought, 'Okay... hello pathogens. That'll be my fault, dead actor alert.' And then he cooks it, and you don't know how the director is going to want to show it. So you have to be ready to have something that behaves the same when it's cooked, it has to be some protein of some kind, because I could have made something that looked like the raw lung out of gelatine, but it wouldn't have worked in the pan; it would obviously just melt. Those are the sorts of issues that I have to deal with."

"IT'S ONE THING to fake something up, like gelatine eyeballs or something, but say you want to make them into a stew and want them to pop to the top? You'd have to figure out some way of, 'Okay, it's ping-pong

This dish is based on the Roman practice of putting snails with certain herbs to gain their flavour.



Hannibal's snails are prepared with people.

Blurring the lines between what is and what isn't on the menu...

The escargots are actually mushrooms.



balls with little weights that detach when it's boiled, so it pops up...' Every time you think you have something solved, something else would come up. 'Oh, by the way, they're going to eat it.' By the way? That's not by the way; that's essential, that's the thing upon which all things turn. Are they going to eat it? I don't know why I'd ever think that I could make something they weren't going to eat, because sometimes the director might say, or the actors will say, 'You know what, I feel Hannibal might just reach over and eat that.' 'Okay, I guess I won't make it out of plaster of Paris and old feathers.'"

The show has earned the kind of fan devotion that most creators can only dream of, in part because there is so much detail, dedication and fantastic work on every single level. "[The challenge] is far more rewarding than anything that's a piece of cake," Poon tells us. "That's one of the things that keeps me so engaged with *Hannibal*, that I can't wait until the next script because

it's a challenge. I don't know if we're all masochists... but I've talked to people in hair and make-up, in sets, and they say the same thing. It's the impossible challenge that makes it so rewarding. You just feel so fabulous having climbed a mountain that seemed to high or a bridge that seemed too far; no, you solved it. The work is its own reward. It's a delight for me as a person who's used to such insular work, to work with so many people who are just top-of-their-game creatives and just bringing everything they can, and it has to do with Fuller, who will not say no! He will not say, 'That's ridiculous, a man can't wear a plaid suit!'"

And her proudest achievement? "I can't tell you, because it is the very biggest surprise of the very last episode!" she laughs. "I wish I could tell you, I just am so proud of that." Our mouths are watering... 🍴

Hannibal: Season Three is now airing exclusively on Sky Living.

This delicious ham hock becomes a human arm.



Every beautiful dish starts somewhere.



Come Dine With Me

How would our favourite TV foodies fare in the kitchen?

Ned (Pushing Daisies)

Service with a song and smile in a gorgeous restaurant. Fruit to die for, although there was a lot of rotting fruit in the kitchen and the dog seemed to be roaming free. Owner seemed nice but nervous.

Service: 10 Taste: 10 Hygiene: 10

Would you go again?: Most definitely.

Hannibal Lecter

I was worried that it would all be a little bit fancy but the food, although elaborate, was delicious. He was charming company but I felt like he was being deliberately coy about his secret ingredients and I wasn't allowed in the kitchen.

Service: 9 Taste: 9 Hygiene: 8

Would you go again?: I'll be back, one way or another.

Dean Winchester (Supernatural)

Dean roared up late, blasting rock music and was completely unapologetic. You'd think he had better things to do than provide decent service. I'm also certain the bacon cheeseburgers he gave me were takeout and that the pie was shop-bought.

Service: 2 Taste: 5 Hygiene: 4

Would you go again?: Not if I can help it.

The Doctor (Doctor Who)

A strange experience indeed. He arrived early, made reference to a vehicle I couldn't see, then kept dashing off before returning with different dishes.

Fish fingers and custard are surprisingly delicious.

Service: 7 Taste: 6 Hygiene: 6

Would you go again?: Yes. He's odd, but definitely fun.

Norma Bates (Bates Motel)

I was promised old-fashioned home cooking and that's what I got. The atmosphere was strange, though. There was a weird undercurrent going on between Norma and her son, and I'm worried that I saw a bloodstain on the floor.

Service: 6 Taste: 7 Hygiene: 3

Would you go again?: No, and I don't think Norman would want me to.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW REVIEWS

SciFiNow™

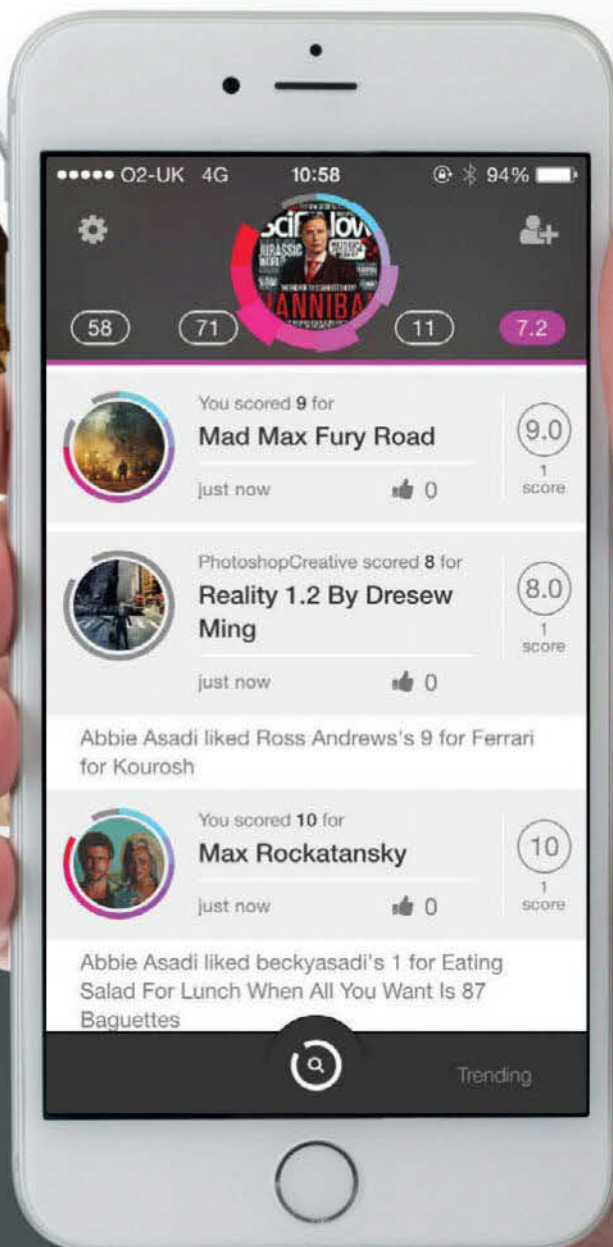
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Steve

Steve Wright
Deputy Editor

At SciFiNow we're very proud of our reviews, but we've always wanted to involve you a lot more than we've been able to. And now we can. As of this issue, SciFiNow's reviews will be using the new scoring network, Just A Score. Don't worry: the scores will be ours, and they will still come with the same trustworthy opinion. But now with the free Just A Score app, for the first time ever, you can follow our scores, like them, and submit your own scores.



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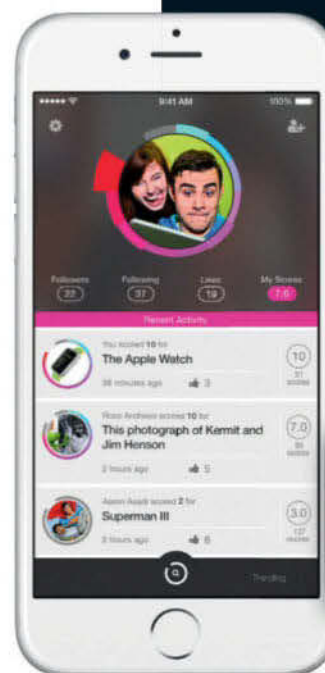
SciFiNow PICK OF THE SCORES...



You're all clear, kid!

You can score absolutely anything on Just a Score. Our favourite this month was seeing how you rated the characters in the Star Wars films...

10	SciFiNow scored 10 for Han Solo
8	SciFiNow scored 8 for Emperor Palpatine (Return Of The Jedi)
7	SciFiNow scored 5 for Obi Wan Kenobi (Episode 3)
5	SciFiNow scored 4 for Jango Fett
2	SciFiNow scored 2 for Anakin Skywalker
1	SciFiNow scored 1 for Jar Jar Binks



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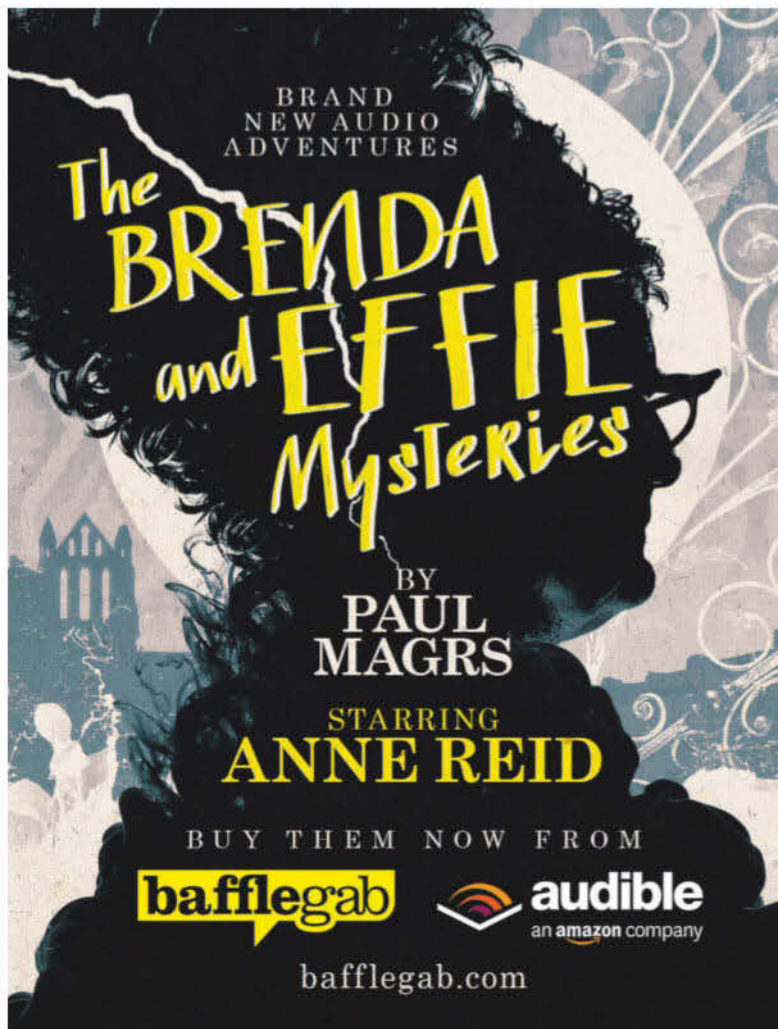
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SciFiNow Reviews

Our thoughts on the pick
of the entertainment
releases out this month

66 CINEMA

Theatrical
releases

- 66 Mad Max:
Fury Road
- 67 Freaks
- 67 The Age Of Adaline
- 68 Moomins On
The Riviera
- 68 The Incident
- 69 Tomorrowland:
A World Beyond

70 HOME/FILM

Films on DVD,
Blu-ray and more

- 70 Dino Time
- 70 Lost River
- 70 Ex Machina
- 71 The Terminator
- 71 The Shadow
- 72 Tusk
- 72 Out Of The Dark
- 72 The Dead Lands
- 74 Cat People
- 74 Forbidden
Kingdom
- 74 Burying The Ex

76 HOME/TV

TV shows on DVD,
Blu-ray and more

- 76 Supernatural:
Season Nine
- 76 12 Monkeys:
Season One
- 77 Once Upon A Time:
Season Five
- 77 Moondial

66 MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

"A COLOSSAL, DELIRIOUS,
JAW-DROPPING JUGGERNAUT"

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shows, and give your thoughts on whether we were right

AWARD EXPLAINED THE 'MUST SEE NOW' AWARD GOES
TO REVIEWS THAT SCORE EIGHT OR MORE...

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Must
see now!

T **TRIVIA** LIAM FOUNTAIN, WHO STARRED IN THE 2011 FAN-MADE SHORT FILM *MAD MAX: RENEGADE*, AUDITIONED FOR THE ROLE OF MAX IN *FURY ROAD*.

FILM INFO

Released

Out now

Certificate

15

Director

George Miller

Screenwriters

George Miller, Brendan McCarthy, Nick Lathouris

Cast

Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron, Nicholas Hoult, Hugh Keays-Byrne, Zoë Kravitz

Distributor

Warner Bros

Running Time

120 mins



ROAD TO OZPLOITATION

Five Ozploitation flicks you need to see



Mad Max (1979)

George Miller's original is a masterclass of low-budget action filmmaking. Still holds up.



Patrick (1978)

A nurse is stalked by a telekinetic killer in a coma in Richard Franklin's gripping horror.



Razorback (1984)

Russell Mulcahy pits an American and a grieving hunter against the fearsome Razorback in this cult classic.



Long Weekend (1978)

Nature turns against a bickering, careless couple who litter throughout their beach holiday.



Road Games (1981)

If one Ozploitation road movie can challenge *Mad Max*, it's Franklin's serial-killer thriller starring Stacy Keach.



SciFiNow
Must
see now!

MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

We're all mad here

Going into a film with high expectations is nearly always a recipe for disaster. The last time we remember being this giddy about the prospect of a filmmaker returning to the series they created was when we were about to watch Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*. But while *Alien* went on without Scott, *Mad Max* has always been George Miller's. Tom Hardy is perfectly cast as the crazy-eyed Road Warrior, but the reason why this feels so right is simple: it's Miller's world, and he's taking us back.

In the Wasteland, the monstrous Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne) rules his kingdom mercilessly, dispensing water when he deems it necessary, harvesting children and milk from his wives, and enforcing justice with his crazed War Boys, who believe that a chrome Valhalla awaits them after a glorious death on the road. So when Imperator Furiosa (Charlize Theron) escapes with five of his young wives, Joe sends his entire army out after them. Chained to the front of one of these vehicles... is Max (Hardy).

There's truly a sense of a master at work, filled with fire, desperate lunatics, monstrous

villains, a few heroes, eccentric details and an armada of vehicles. He uses visual details instead of exposition; we don't know how Joe came to power, or how Furiosa became involved. The biggest clues we get to Max's past are through his violent hallucinations, and he tells us in voiceover that he is "the one who runs from the living and the dead." That's pretty much it. Hardy's dialogue is mostly confined to grunts, mumbling and gestures, and he inhabits the character perfectly.

Still, it's not really his story. The real hero of *Fury Road* is Furiosa, the hard-as-nails War Rig driver who is determined to get her charges out of Joe's reach, with an unflashy, commanding performance from Theron. She gets a little more back story than Max, but the same is true of all of the characters: we know what we need to. Just look at the names of the wives: Splendid (Rosie Huntington-Whiteley), Toast (Zoë Kravitz), Fragile (Courtney Eaton), Capable (Riley Keough), and Abbey Lee – a prime scene-stealer as The Dag.

The subtext of domestic abuse is prominent and decidedly potent. "We are not things!" is their refrain. Harvesting their milk and children and bellowing about "property," Joe clearly doesn't see it that way. With strong performances, we're quickly invested in this chase beyond the excitement of creative explosions.

As for the chase – well, that's difficult to describe effectively. Once Joe sets off

after Furiosa, the film really is one long pursuit through the ruined landscape that very occasionally pauses for breath. It boils down to one truck against a barbarianised fleet. Cars flip, tumble, explode, get sucked into a tornado, and explode while getting sucked into a tornado. There's a berserk invention that prevents these lengthy set pieces from ever dragging. It's amazing that after everything that precedes it, the final confrontation still dazzles.

Which brings us back to the importance of Miller. This is a great example of how action and orchestrated mayhem can and should bear the mark of their creator. From the War Boys off their tits on paint fumes to Nux (Nicholas Hoult)'s named tumours, and the hazy memories of a world long lost to the guy with the giant guitar flame-thrower, this is entirely his creation. A bigger budget and CGI has allowed him to go bigger without losing anything of himself. This is a colossal, breathless, delirious, jaw-dropping juggernaut that is simply a joy. A lovely day indeed.

Jonathan Hatfull



SciFiNow scored 9 for
Mad Max: Fury Road

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Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior
The best of the series and one of the great action movies.





FREAKS

One of us

SciFiNow
Must
see now!

Details 12A // 62 mins // Out now **Director** Tod Browning **Screenwriter** Tod Robbins **Cast** Wallace Ford, Leila Hyams, Olga Baclanova **Distributor** Anime Ltd



From a cautionary tale to a cult classic, the journey of Tod Browning's *Freaks* is one of the best known of the era, as

Browning's perceived failure and the movie's controversial subject matter drove him into obscurity. Now, it's regarded as one of the finest genre films ever made, and rightly so.

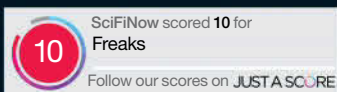
Circus leader Hans (Harry Earles) falls head over heels for the Big Top's new star attraction, the beautiful Cleopatra (Olga Baclanova). Although the rest of the troupe worry about why someone like her would fall for a dwarf, they put their concerns aside when it's announced that the two are going to marry. However, their concerns are well founded, as Cleopatra has been scheming with strongman Hercules (Harry Victor) to kill Hans and inherit his vast fortune.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that the impact of Browning's film might have been lessened slightly over the years, whether due to its influence on pop culture, from Katherine Dunn's novel *Geek Love* to the most recent season of *American Horror Story*, or simply due to us being harder to shock these days. With every successive viewing, however, *Freaks* resonates as strongly as it ever did.

As the screeching hysteria of the time is overlooked, Browning places the audience among the people who work as attractions, showing their everyday lives, and introducing Cleopatra as the cruel interloper, whose lover and confidante is the brutish strongman. The filmmaker is clearly fascinated by these people, but there's a tenderness here that is often overlooked.

Of course, there are the obligatory relatable 'normal' characters and their budding romance, but the real story is that of Hans, and the reaction of the performers when they realise that he's been deceived. The final punishment of Cleopatra and Hercules is still nightmarish, but it's that party scene that continues to provide the film with its most iconic moments, as the bride hysterically refuses the celebration goblet offered by Angeleno. With strong performances and a surprising tenderness, *Freaks* more than deserves its towering reputation.

Jonathan Hatfull



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Santa Sangre
Jodorowsky's stunning circus-set drama is both visually beautiful and powerful.



THE AGE OF ADALINE

Lost in the moment

Details 12A // 112 mins // Out now **Director** Lee Toland Krieger **Screenwriters** J Mills Goodloe, Salvador Paskowitz **Cast** Blake Lively, Michiel Huisman, Harrison Ford **Distributor** Lionsgate



Lee Toland Krieger has made his name directing indie hits, such as *The Vicious Kind* and *Celeste & Jesse Forever*.

Just as the latter allowed Andy Samberg to flex more than just his comedic muscles, here former *Gossip Girl*-er Blake Lively is allowed to take centre stage as Adaline, rendered ageless after being struck by lightning, and subsequently flitting from country to country, for fear of being discovered.

It's on her most recent life that she encounters kindly philanthropist Ellis (Michiel Huisman), upon which she starts to question her self-imposed exile from love. However, as she says at one point, "it's the little things that slip you up," and sure enough her past comes roaring back into the present.

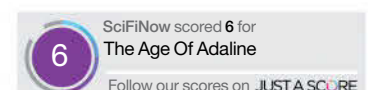
Those who saw the atrocious *A New York Winter's Tale* may worry about the apparent similarities in the plot description, but this is a much better film. Lively channels Cate Blanchett and

Tilda Swinton in her role as a 100-year-old woman trapped in a 29-year-old's body, and never at any point does she break character in this regard. Her performance isn't the most dynamic, but it doesn't need to be – she's trying to be low-key, and definitely succeeds, even if the supporting players to their best to blow her off the screen. Ellen Burstyn is excellent as her octogenarian daughter (who's convincingly 'younger' than Lively), as does Huisman, who is charming and endearing.

A big surprise, however, is Ford. Eschewing the easy option of phoning it in, this is some of his best acting for ages – and it would be wrong at this point not to mention Anthony Ingruber, who pulls off an excellent Ford impression as his character's younger self.

It's engaging and feel-good, if occasionally predictable, but all in all *The Age of Adaline* functions perfectly well as a harmless, fantasy-infused date movie. It's hard to really dislike.

Steve Wright



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button
There are plenty of layers to this story about Brad Pitt ageing in reverse.



MOOMINS ON THE RIVIERA

Somewhat extraordinary and part fantastic

Details U // 80 mins // Out now **Directors** Xavier Picard, Hanna Hemilä **Screenwriters** Leslie Stewart, Annina Enckell, Xavier Picard, Hanna Hemilä **Cast** Russell Tovey, Tracy Ann Oberman, Nathaniel Parker **Distributor** Vertigo



A whimsical hand- drawn animation concerned with the woes of consumerism that wonderfully embraces the mischievous spirit of

its eccentric Finnish creator, the late, great Tove Jansson, this light-hearted cartoon sees the Moomins take a jaunt along the French Riviera. Here, their bond is tested by the lure of celebrity and possessions. It's based on an original comic strip, inspired by Tove's own visit to the region with her mother, and much of it still rings true today.

Moominpappa becomes embroiled in the high stakes of the art world, while Snorkmaiden's sudden obsession with fashion adds another amusing layer to the story. Her attempt to squeeze into a size-eight bikini brilliantly skews the absurdity of the pressure to conform to societal norms. Moomintroll (voiced by Russell Tovey) and Moominmamma are simply bemused by the whole situation.

Despite the fearless scamp Little My not appearing in the original comic strip, she is a welcome addition here,



and it's a real treat to watch her as she acts as something of a moral compass for the Moomin family. Mindful of the French setting, the writers imbue the playful deadpan humour of Jacques Tati when it comes to the superficiality of the exaggerated elite characters we meet on the Riviera. Cheeky real-life references are made throughout, including a character named Audrey Glamour, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Audrey Hepburn. The Sixties-style audio accompaniment further pays homage to Tati, and adds to its snappy charm.

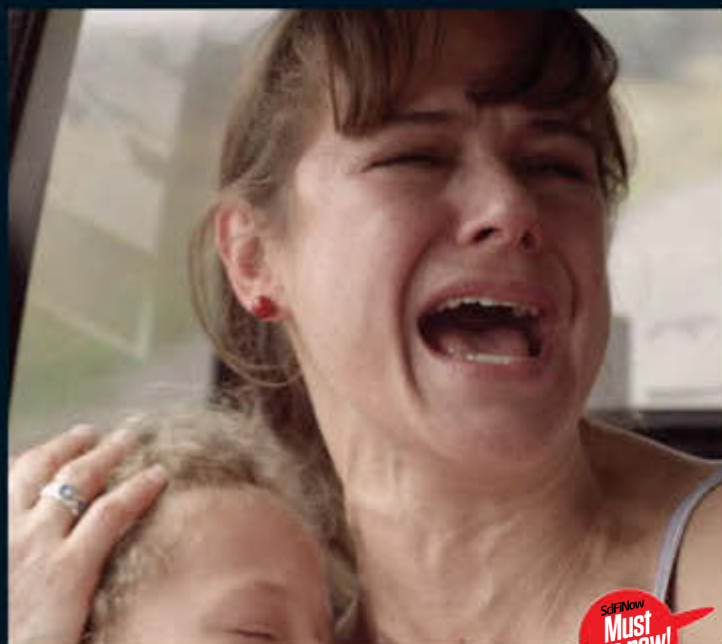
The Moomins enter a world they don't understand, and realise they don't have to be a part of it if they so choose, delivering a positively uplifting and enriching message no matter what your age. Watching the Moomins clash with the glamorous lifestyle is a delight, but it is a shame that Moominvalley only makes a swift appearance as does the wise old Snufkin. Some of its surreal edge is lost in the changing of location, but Jansson's zingy one-liners are still as good as ever.

Katherine McLaughlin

SciFiNow scored 7 for Moomins On The Riviera
Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...

Up
A moving and beautiful animation that serves as a simple reminder of the important things in life.



SciFiNow
Must see now!

THE INCIDENT

Road to nowhere

Details TBC // 100 mins // Out now **Director** Isaac Ezban **Screenwriter** Isaac Ezban **Cast** Raul Mendez, Magda Brugengheim **Distributor** Yellow Films



The nightmarish scenario of being trapped in endless, illogical spaces is given the intriguing *Twilight Zone*-type treatment in

The Incident, Isaac Ezban's probing sci-fi feature debut. Claustrophobia comes up against agoraphobia in two parallel angst-ridden character predicaments that occur following an eerily ominous off-screen explosion.

The first incident involves a detective pursuing two brothers wanted for drug charges, who find themselves contained in an endless staircase, which ultimately leads back to where they were in a maddening infinite cycle. In the second scenario, a family embark on a country road that backtracks on itself, preventing them from reaching their intended destination. The predicament becomes particularly traumatic after their asthmatic daughter's inhaler is irreplaceably damaged and she suffers an untimely attack.

These kind of theatre-of-the-absurd chamber piece 'horror' films succeed or fail on the strength of their performances. Fortunately, the paranoia is made creepily relatable thanks to a committed cast who ensure their characters' desperation in seemingly hopeless situations

are communicated with agonising relatability. It's a tense ride handled expertly by Ezban and co – with a real urgency to the cinematography during the build up that is extraordinarily palpable – helped by a frantic score and menacingly familiar production design. Eventually, events quieten down for introspection, which is where the endurance levels of the audience is tested.

Whether you swallow the mind-bending exposition depends on your preference of explanation over ambiguity, but a character's reading of the dystopian Philip K Dick novel *Time Out Of Joint* neatly hints toward this enigmatic culmination. One thing is certain: with yet another mind-bending character situation sci-fi in post-production (*Los Parecidos*), Ezban, with his intelligently poised preoccupations concerning the consequences of the progression of time, is a director to watch out for.

Oliver Pfeiffer

SciFiNow scored 8 for The Incident
Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

OR STAY IN AND WATCH...

The Twilight Zone
Catch the Shatner-starring 'Nightmare at 20,000 Feet' in the creepy character predicament show.

FILM INFO

Released

Out now

Certificate

12A

Director

Brad Bird

Screenwriters

Damon Lindelof, Brad Bird,
Jeff Jensen

Cast

Britt Robertson, George
Clooney, Kathryn Hahn,
Hugh Laurie

Distributor

Disney

Running Time

130 mins



TOMORROWLAND: A WORLD BEYOND

We built this city on
nostalgia and optimism

DISNEY'S NEW DAWN

Our impressions of
A World Beyond...

Part of the team who brought you *Lost* are involved, so the big question remains: is there a showdown on a beach? Of course there is!

What do they wear in a world where anything is possible? Mainly highly starched polyester clothing, it appears.

Michael Giacchino does it again with a great soundtrack that adds tension and complements a voyage to a magical world.

Kathryn Hahn makes an appearance looking like a Fifties-era Princess Leia.

There is some rather exquisite design in *Tomorrowland*, including a multiple-layered floating swimming pool.

The top-notch CGI ensures the effects are massively impressive; the action is immersive and dynamic.

Famed country music singer Tim McGraw plays Casey's dad and a NASA engineer, and he's pretty convincing.

Tomorrowland: A World Beyond sets its stall out as a love letter to a bygone era of sci-fi and Disney classics from Brad Bird that delivers a positive message about the power of the imagination, albeit with some off-the-chart levels of cheese. This family adventure mixes wondrous sci-fi zest with a progressive spirit. Its optimistic sentiment is hard to knock, despite it preaching a bit too much at times.

Britt Robertson is fantastic in the lead role of Casey Newton, delivering snappy one-liners with aplomb while desperately clinging to her red NASA cap for dear life like a young female Indiana Jones. She is teamed up not only with George Clooney, who plays grumpy genius Frank Walker, but also relative newcomer Raffey Cassidy. The girls get to kick some ass on a perilous road trip full of grand spectacle and striking gadgetry. It's massively heartening to witness young women at the forefront of an upbeat exciting adventure such as this.

You can feel both Bird and Lindelof's distinct voices and influences knocking against one



another throughout this fast-paced race against time and to the future, which posits a teenage girl as a potential saviour of the world. The utopia of *Tomorrowland* is based on the attraction in Anaheim, and recalls the work of Jules Verne and Sixties cartoon *The Jetsons*, and some of the machines we meet are essentially hi-tech versions of *Forbidden Planet*'s Robby the Robot. There are many nods to Saturday family adventures like *The Rocketeer*, and quite a few to the bicycle-riding kids of *ET*. It's something of a throwback to simpler times as it emulates wholesome cinematic family adventures through the ages.

The viewer is taken into *Tomorrowland* on numerous occasions throughout. Seen through the eyes of Casey, it is a place of great promise, but to the world-weary Walker it offers nothing much. One of the highlights is simply watching the rapid back and forth between the two as they bicker out their sides of the argument. On first meeting they try to outsmart each other to very amusing ends. Their pairing also delivers exhilarating visuals featuring a flying bathtub and some particularly intricate home security devices.

Along the way, Casey stops off at a memorabilia store, which holds a vast array of filmic history. A naïve kid scouring the shelves of past sci-fi for answers encapsulates the very essence of what Bird and his creative team achieve here. This particular scene has a *Twilight Zone* feel to

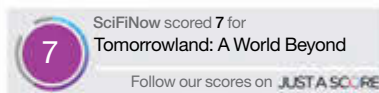
it, and in turn *Eerie, Indiana*, with a normal kid like Casey placed in an extraordinary situation. Some fantastic-looking retro-futuristic rayguns appear, further adding to the Sixties aesthetic. There's a gleeful tinge of darkness to the humour that recalls Joe Dante's best work. In addition to that, it isn't afraid to kill off characters.

Unlike the recent spate of dystopia films like *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, *Tomorrowland* drives its narrative to a far more optimistic place. Rather than focusing on the negative, it asks what can be done to change the future. Doom and gloom don't see much screen time.

Without wanting to give too much away, Athena's narrative delivers some moving moments, and Cassidy has great chemistry with her fellow actors. Hugh Laurie appears as the grand ruler of *Tomorrowland*, but at times his performance and dialogue feel far too on-the-nose and preachy.

The heady thrills of nostalgia power this spectacular looking ride along, and it's a lot of fun while it lasts.

Katherine McLaughlin



OR STAY IN AND WATCH...



The Rocketeer
A young pilot becomes a hero thanks to the discovery of a jetpack in this throwback to Thirties and Forties serials.

DINO TIME

Di-normous waste of time

Details PG // 86 mins // 2012 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now **Directors** Yoon Suk Choi, John Kafka **Cast** Melanie Griffith, Pamela Adlon, Jane Lynch, Rob Schneider, Stephen Baldwin, William Baldwin **Distributor** Entertainment One



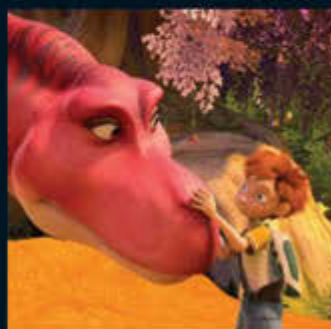
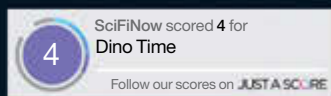
When the world's most annoying kid gets grounded for wrecking a dinosaur exhibit at his dinosaur-themed town's dinosaur museum, he sneaks out of the house and accidentally travels back in time to the prehistoric era with his tattling sister and best friend. It's basically a cross between *Jurassic Park*, *Back To The Future* and *Dora The Explorer*.

Dino Time takes everything we learnt from *Jurassic Park* and throws it out of the window. If your first instinct when faced, with a full-sized Tyrannosaurus Rex, is to circle around it on your skateboard while whooping and cheering, you're going to get dead quite quickly. But alas, no. A tragic and gruesome death near the start of the film followed by a journey of dino-vengeance for a lost sibling would

have been a lot more interesting, but that's probably unfair to ask of a children's film.

For children, it's probably a fun, exciting and entertaining dinosaur romp, but for adults with fully formed brains it's torture.

Poppy-Jay Palmer



LOST RIVER

Washed downstream

Details 15 // 95 mins // 2014 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now **Director** Ryan Gosling **Cast** Iain DeCaestecker, Matt Smith, Christina Hendricks, Saoirse Ronan **Distributor** E1 Entertainment



Ryan Gosling has worked with a bevy of Hollywood's most eye-catching directors, with the works of Derek Cianfrance and Nicholas Winding Refn providing the obvious inspiration for *Lost River*, his feature-film debut. It's a pity that the final result is ultimately all flourish and no substance.

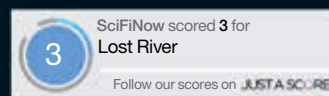
Despite the presence of the talented likes of Iain DeCaestecker, Saoirse Ronan, Christina Hendricks,



Matt Smith and Ben Mendelsohn among the cast, there is very little here to anchor the script beneath the oppressively David Lynch-inspired overtones. The story plods by with little momentum, and to call the ending an anti-climax would be an understatement of quite huge proportions.

It bears the feel of an experimental movie – which it essentially is, as Gosling's directorial debut – so it'd be harsh to write him off completely. Aesthetically speaking at least, *Lost River* is at times a beguilingly hypnotic debut feature from Gosling. Shame that's all there is to recommend about it.

Steve Wright



EX MACHINA

Rage against the machine



Details 15 // 108 mins // 2015 // **DVD** // **iTunes** // **Released** 6 June **Director** Alex Garland **Cast** Domhnall Gleeson, Alicia Vikander, Oscar Isaac, Sonoya Mizuno **Distributor** Universal Pictures UK



There's something immensely unsettling about *Ex Machina* that doesn't reveal itself nor appear to go away. It just

lingers in the air, blowing on the back of your neck and giving you goose bumps.

Caleb (Domhnall Gleeson), a computer programmer working for the world's most popular search engine Bluebook, wins a company competition to join the CEO Nathan (Oscar Isaac) at his mansion in the wilderness and

get a closer look at his research. But the competition was a ruse to test Nathan's latest project, a humanoid robot named Ava (Alicia Vikander). It's Caleb's job to interact with Ava and subject her to the Turing test of artificial intelligence, and in the process determine whether she can pass as human. But in the spirit of mysterious, isolated research facilities, strange things start to happen: power outages, weird encounters, building lockdowns... Caleb begins to question if he can trust his boss, or if he should listen to Ava's pleas for escape.

As far as genre is concerned, Alex Garland's directorial debut is a fondue pot. It's an art film and a sci-fi, and it puts the 'suspense' in 'suspense thriller'. It also thrills, but not in the guns-blazing, whodunit sense. It feels almost like it should have its own genre, or create a new one at least. There's no mystery unsolved by the end of it, but it still leaves you obsessing over what the hell just happened.

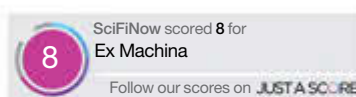


A lot of the entertainment value comes from the cast. It's almost impossible to think about anyone else whenever Isaac is on screen. Likewise, Vikander is an uncrackable brain-teaser with layers hidden under more layers, and Gleeson is perfect as the everyman, albeit with something about him that is slightly off but untraceable.

The characters themselves are also interesting. It's so easy to like and root for Caleb initially, but once Ava's true motives are revealed, he becomes just another obstacle in her way.

All elements of Garland's film come together to create something strange but spectacular that stays with you long after it ends.

Poppy-Jay Palmer



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Prometheus
Humanoid artificial intelligence and a base in the middle of nowhere make for bleak viewing.

THE TERMINATOR

Back to the start



Details 15 // 107 mins // 1984 //  **Released** Out now

Director James Cameron **Cast** Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Michael Biehn

Distributor 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment



The Terminator has endured in the cultural zeitgeist ever since its creation. However, the success of *Terminator*

2: *Judgement Day* has meant that first and foremost, people remember Arnold Schwarzenegger as the good cyborg sent back in time to protect John Connor. It's easy to forget that his original outing as a remorseless killer sent back in time to extinguish all hope in the future is just as good, and even more important.

As far as action movies go, it remains a perfect example of how to get the form right. The pacing is masterful, the action sequences are by shades full of urgency and breathtaking (even now), and things are suitably serious without ever getting too po-faced (Schwarzenegger's "Get Out" line remains the epitome of comic timing done just right. Its influence on both the action movie and

the post-apocalyptic sub-genre remain crystal-clear to this day.

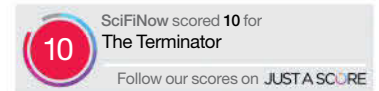
Even more impressive is the way in which *The Terminator* can be enjoyed from a variety of different angles. Turn your brain off, and it's a frenetic and frantic thrill ride. Turn it back on, and the underlying motifs of misuse of technology, playing God and the virtues of companionship against going alone gain a new relevance. For a film containing a homicidal robot as its protagonist it's surprisingly subtle.

Credit where it's due; no one else but Schwarzenegger could have inhabited the role of the T-800 with such conviction. Being convincing as a emotionless husk might seem like a back-handed compliment; in reality it's anything but. Linda Hamilton and Michael Biehn too are excellent as Sarah Connor and Kyle Reese, both selling the peril they find themselves in.



Having stayed both relevant thematically – and still remarkable from an effects perspective – everyone could do with revisiting *The Terminator*.

Steve Wright



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Terminator 2: Judgement Day
Once it's over, move on to the next one.

THE SHADOW

The ice is slippery

Details 12 // 108 mins // 1994 //  **Released** 25 May

Director Russell Mulcahy **Cast** Alec Baldwin, Penelope Ann Miller, Ian McKellen,

Tim Curry, John Lone **Distributor** MediumRare



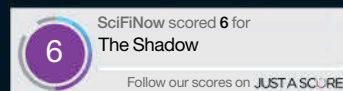
When a WWI GI-turned-opium kingpin is kidnapped from his palace in the Tibetan mountains, he is granted the power of psychic hypnosis and told to use it only for good. Seven years later, he moves back to his hometown of New York City to fight crime. With his power, he influences minds and their perception of him so he can never be seen. He is *The Shadow*.



Some of the cast are wasted on insignificant characters with lame lines – the great Ian McKellen and joyful-to-watch Tim Curry in particular – although Alec Baldwin's debonair but deadpan anti-hero Lamont Cranston, aka *The Shadow*, is worth watching he film for alone. The story is a little lacklustre, but Baldwin's delivery of *The Shadow's* already funny script is hysterical in places.

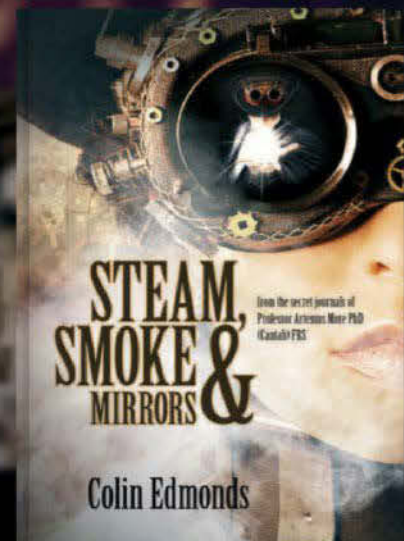
Unfortunately for *The Shadow*, it was released the same year as *The Mask*, and most likely got lost in Jim Carrey's backdraft, but it's just as entertaining and ridiculous. However, like *The Mask*, it's not a game changer or particularly memorable. It's just a fun way to kill time.

Poppy-Jay Palmer



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TUSK

The old man and the seal

Details 15 // 102 mins // 2015 // **DVD** // **iTunes** // **Released** 6 June **Director** Kevin Smith
Cast Justin Long, Michael Parks, Genesis Rodriguez, Haley Joel Osment
Distributor Sony Pictures Home Entertainment



Kevin Smith's ongoing

exploration into horror continues to produce mixed results. Like the ferocious and frustrating *Red State*, *Tusk* shows a filmmaker who doesn't pull his punches, but gets easily sidetracked. The idea for the film sprang from a podcast with Smith's producer Scott Mosier, and there's a combination of dark humour, confrontational gore, strong performances and stuff that doesn't work.

Wallace Bryton (Justin Long) is an obnoxious shock-jock for the 21st century. He travels to Canada for his



podcast, the Not-See Party, for an interview that falls apart, but a flyer in a bar bathroom offers a ray of hope. Howard Howe (Michael Parks) is an old man who lives alone and wants to tell his life story. Wallace soon realises that there's more to his tales of shipwreck than an old man who survived the impossible. Howard has faced the beast in himself, and wants Wallace to become that beast: a walrus, to be exact.

The first half is very strong. Smith's glee at getting to make something so strange and twisted is contagious, and it's tremendous fun to watch Long make the most of the selfish, crass protagonist they've created. Wallace is obviously clever, and we're told he used to be sweet, but we're not too upset when it's obvious that Howard has something horrifying in store for him.

As with *Red State*, the star of the film is Parks. The veteran is at the centre of a strange Venn diagram of actors that can deliver long, powerful speeches about abuse and Ernest Hemingway,

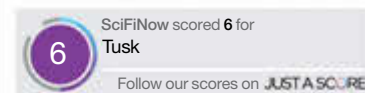


shamelessly mug with a Hollywood superstar in a fake nose, and sew a man into a walrus suit made of human skin. As for those body horror sequences, they are truly stomach-turning.

So it's a shame when the second half begins and Smith sends Wallace's co-host (Haley Joel Osment) and girlfriend (Genesis Rodriguez) after him, which adds in the aforementioned Hollywood star in a silly nose and a Québécois accent. It's weirdly compelling for a couple of minutes, but so much of the tension and pitch black humour is lost.

It's not quite a success, then, but it's worth taking a look for that first half and the visceral gut punches Smith manages to land.

Jonathan Hatfull



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



The Human Centipede
 It's obviously an influence, and it's undeniably zeitgeisty.

OUT OF THE DARK

The little children suffer

Details 15 // 90 mins // 2014 // **DVD** // **iTunes** // **Released** 22 June **Director** Lluís Quílez
Cast Julia Stiles, Scott Speedman, Stephen Rea **Distributor** Entertainment One



This ghost story from director Lluís Quílez aims for the restrained, socially conscious chills of the likes of *The*

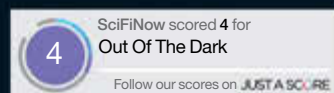
Orphanage and *Painless* (on which Quílez worked), but sadly falls short. Sarah (Julia Stiles) and Paul (Scott Speedman) Harriman move to Colombia with their young daughter to work for Sarah's father (Stephen Rea), who owns a manufacturing plant. When their daughter goes missing, a local ghost story emerges as the only possible explanation.

Out Of The Dark wears its environmental message on its sleeve, and there's certainly tremendous potential here. However, there's also a reluctance to push the supernatural element into horror. It works well when demonstrating the gap between the health opportunities offered to the Harrimans and those available

to the locals, but at a certain point it needs to grip the audience, and it doesn't quite get there.

The final 20 minutes pick up the pace and there are some strong performances from Stiles and Speedman, but this is disappointing, if well-intentioned.

Jonathan Hatfull



THE DEAD LANDS

Two tribes go to war

Details 15 // 107 mins // 2014 // **DVD** // **Released** Out now
Director Tao Fraser **Cast** James Rolleston, Lawrence Makoare, Te Kohe Tuhaka
Distributor ICON Entertainment



There's definitely something exciting about the prospect of a Maori action epic.

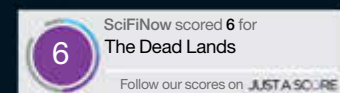
Director Tao Fraser was obviously hoping to transfer the bloody thrills of *Apocalypto*'s chase to the New Zealand landscape, and he occasionally succeeds. Hongi (James Rolleston) must avenge the murder of his tribe with the help of the mysterious and reportedly immortal Warrior (Lawrence Makoare), who lives in the Dead

Lands. He'll either get his revenge, or die trying.

As with the films that Fraser is inspired by, the story isn't particularly important, it's the thrills that count. However, *The Dead Lands* is rarely as gripping as it feels it should be. The distinct fighting style of the Maoris is arresting, and the relationship between Hongi and the Warrior is well-played by Rolleston and Makoare, the latter in particular impressing as someone who might just snap and tear your head off for no reason.

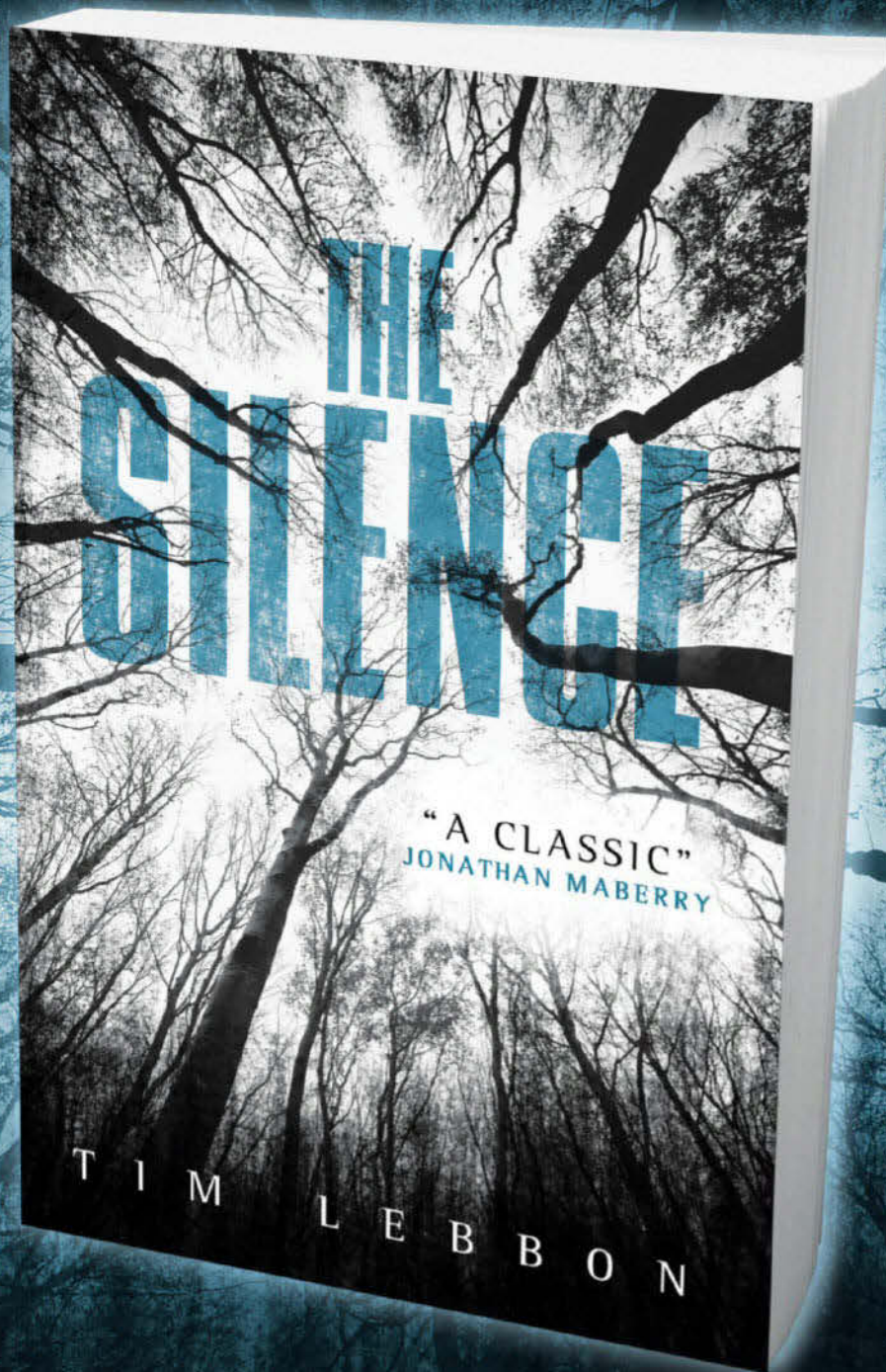
It's striking in places and well shot, but formulaic and a bit of a disappointment for anyone looking for a cinematic adrenaline rush.

Jonathan Hatfull



“A MASTERFUL SYMPHONY OF HORROR”

– CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN



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CAT PEOPLE

Putting out fire with gasoline

Details 18 // 118 mins // 1982 // **Released** Out now **Director** Paul Schrader
Cast Natassja Kinski, Malcolm McDowell, John Heard **Distributor** Mediumrare



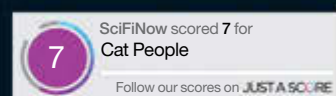
Paul Schrader's slightly ludicrous erotic reimagining of the 1942 horror looks appropriately gorgeous on Blu-ray, as the film's bold colours and Giorgio Moroder's soundtrack feel right at home in HD.

Natassja Kinski plays the virginal Irena, who moves to New Orleans to meet her long-lost brother Paul (Malcolm McDowell). She soon realises that they share a supernatural, animalistic secret that leads to lust, death and strange changes. Will she give in to Paul's incestuous urging, or can she pursue a romance with kindly zoologist Oliver (John Heard)?

Schrader plays everything completely straight, leaving it to the cast to either go big (McDowell) or look puzzled (Heard). There's a raw power to the movie that hasn't diminished as the slow burn is punctuated by sudden

gore or the thrill of the hunt. The cinematography is fantastic, the music is brilliant, and Kinski is perfect as the young woman going through a powerful awakening. It does drag in places, but *Cat People* is as intoxicating and potent as it ever was. And Bowie's theme song is still superb.

Jonathan Hatfull



FORBIDDEN KINGDOM

Into darkness

Details 15 // 107 mins // 2015 // **Released** Out now **Director** Oleg Stepchenko
Cast Charles Dance, Jason Flemyng **Distributor** High Fliers Films



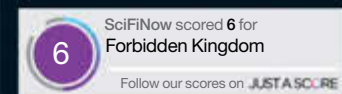
Having been initially released in Europe over a year ago in January 2014, opening under the title *Viy 3D* (and renamed from *Forbidden Empire*), *Forbidden Kingdom* sees Jason Flemyng (*X-Men: First Class*) take centre stage as 18th Century cartographer Jonathan Green, who finds himself lost in Eastern Europe,

before encountering a strange, superstitious village.

All the warning signs are present before you even start to watch the film: delayed release date, name changes, big-name actor who barely appears (Charles Dance, who seemingly remains in the same room for almost the entire duration), and special effects that would have looked rosey a decade ago. Yet despite this, *Forbidden Kingdom* often manages to be intriguing and enjoyable, thanks in large part to a game Flemyng and the rest of the otherwise mostly unknown ensemble.

We suspect that this is one that might slip through the cracks, but you can certainly do worse than give it a go.

Steve Wright



BURYING THE EX

Joe Dante returns to horror-comedy

Details TBC // 89 mins // 2014 // **Released** 19 June **Director** Joe Dante
Cast Anton Yelchin, Ashley Greene, Alexandra Daddario, Oliver Cooper
Distributor ACE Entertainment Films



Joe Dante, king of enjoyable hard-edged family films – how did it go wrong?

Burying The Ex is a simple tale of a man who regrets moving in with his girlfriend. There's some fun to be had in Anton Yelchin's dilemma, as he finds that killing your zombified ex (Ashley Greene) isn't as easy as it looks in horror movies, but on the whole the film is a muddle of clichés.

The film is at its best in the all-too-brief moments where it cuts loose and

indulges in pure comedy horror, and Greene's performance ironically comes to life once the poorly written Evelyn is dead.

But the film suffers from being entirely unsure of its audience. The characters swear and talk graphically about threesomes, and yet the film is incredibly coy. It's the sort of movie where people somehow have sex fully clothed and all the violence is unseen, even though it's cartoony. It's like Dante wants to make a more grown-up film than he's known for, but he keeps veering instinctively towards a PG tone.

No-one involved in the film ever seems to have met a young person or a woman (one poor girl has to deliver the line "OMFingG"). Max, a 'nice guy', is predictably caught between his uptight ex and a horror-loving Manic Pixie Dream Girl, a trope which is getting pretty tired.

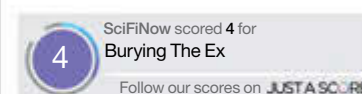


The film is stuffed full of horror references and aimed at genre lovers, and yet there is nothing in the film that is new. Clichés are ticked off routinely, with no attempt to subvert them. Yelchin sleepwalks through the movie, with only Greene's neurotic zombie providing any entertainment value.

Had this movie come out in 2013, it might have been hailed as a moderate success. But it misses the zeitgeist by a couple of years and has the misfortune of arriving on the heels of the far superior *Life After Beth*.

By comparison, *Burying The Ex* is stale, predictable and – the ultimate fail of a horror-comedy – neither funny nor scary.

Abigail Chandler

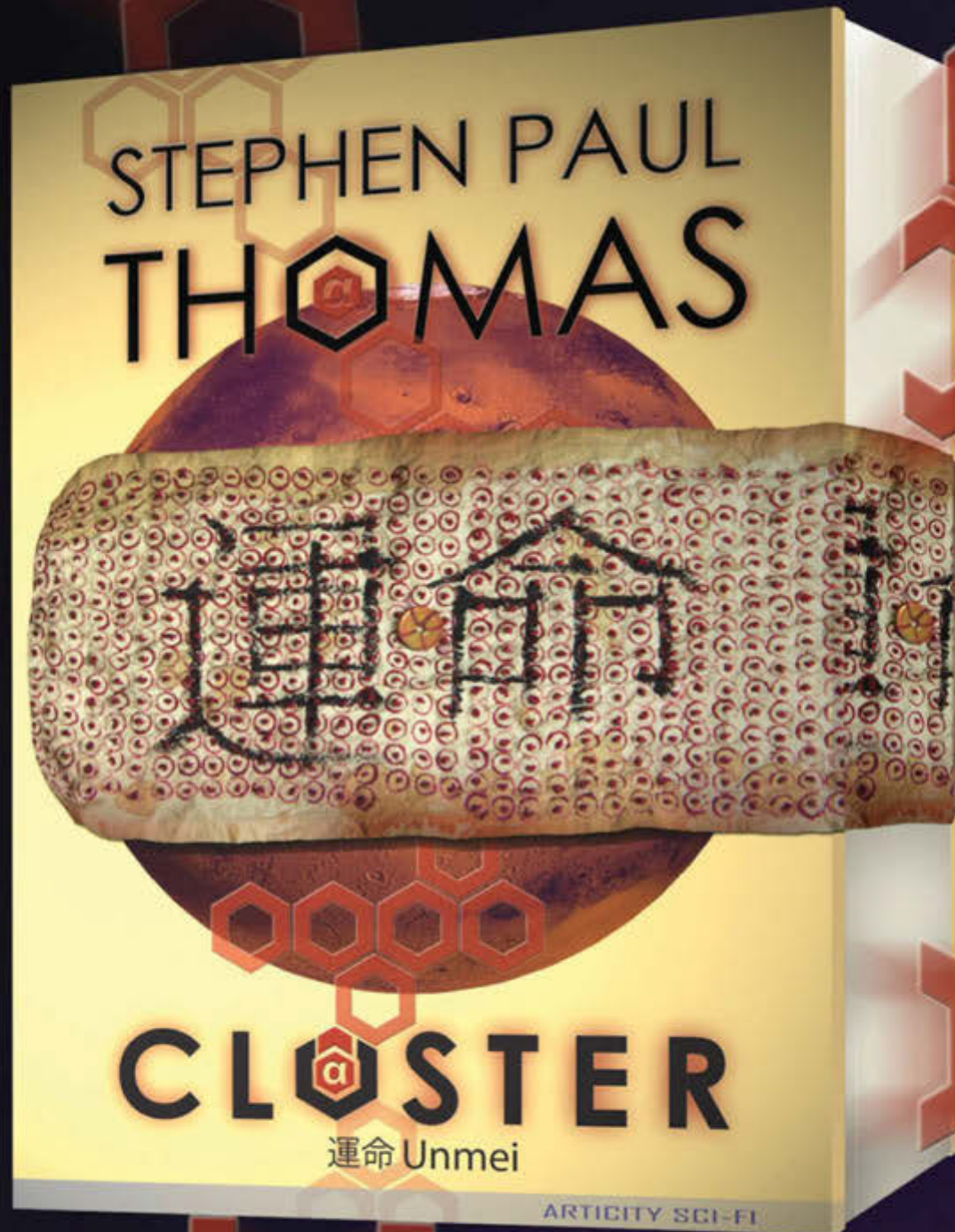


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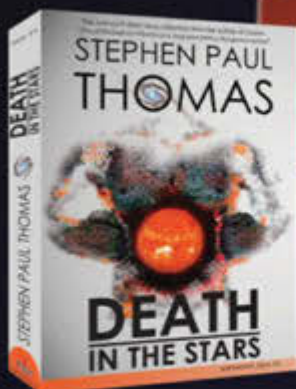


Life After Beth
 The far superior zombie-ex-girlfriend film. Dane DeHaan and Aubrey Plaza are a delight.

The story of a Solar Sytem-wide epidemic



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Season Nine

SUPERNATURAL

Dog-tired but still lovable

Details 15 // 1012 mins // // 8 June **Creator** Eric Kripke
Cast Jared Padalecki, Jensen Ackles, Misha Collins, Mark A Sheppard
Distributor Warner Home Video



It's difficult to be unbiased about the ninth season of a show you have loved for years, but here it goes: *Supernatural*

Season Nine isn't excellent. It's all right. It's not as good as Seasons One to Three, but probably better than Season Eight.

However, the cast, characters and setup continue to be excellent, if that's what you're into. When you've been following the Winchesters for eight seasons, and Castiel and Crowley for four, there is very little they can do to stop you liking them. It's a long-running curse.

The ongoing storyline involves the Winchesters trying to stop Metatron from declaring himself God. It can be quite intense and heart-wrenching at times, but it doesn't hit the same buttons as Dean's demon deal in Season Three or Sam's apocalypse in Season Five. A lot of the tropes have been used before: Dean's search for Cain's mighty knife is too much like the brothers' quest for the

Colt in Season Two, and the whole possession thing – angel possession, demon possession, take your pick – never ends. But the pay-off in the finale, though not as shocking as some seasons, is still pretty great.

The goofy filler episodes are top-notch as always. In particular, 'Dog Dean Afternoon' is easily on par with 'Yellow Fever' and 'Changing Channels' of earlier seasons, and 'Slumber Party', which guest-stars Felicia Day as the brilliant Charlie Bradbury and Kaniehtiio Horn as Dorothy of Oz, has so much spin-off potential.

Ultimately, loving *Supernatural* this late in the game is like loving an old dog: you were excited when you got it and have loads of fun memories from its early years, but now it's old, slow and tired. You let it sit on you and eat your shoes because you love it so much, but you're still left rubbing its back and mopping up sick when it throws up everywhere. You don't give up on it though. You know you're going to stay with it until the end.

Poppo-Jay Palmer

SciFiNow scored 6 for Supernatural
 Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Charmed
 Three sisters with an unbreakable bond fight the forces of evil. They also happen to be witches.



Season One

12 MONKEYS

Back to the future

Details 15 // 559 mins // // Out now **Creators** Travis Fickett, Terry Matalas
Cast Aaron Stanford, Amanda Schull, Emily Hampshire, Barbara Sukowa, Kirk Acevedo
Distributor Universal Pictures UK



In among the current spate of film-to-TV reimaginings, *12 Monkeys* seems like one of the more curious

choices. Lacking the star power among its cast possessed by the likes of *Fargo*, *Bates Motel* and *Hannibal*, its appeal is heavily reliant on existing love for Terry Gilliam's original.

Where *From Dusk Til Dawn* faltered by stretching out a film-length plot into a series format that it was ill-suited to, *12 Monkeys* instead goes in a different direction from the off, sacrificing the madcap energy of the original in favour of a more straightforward time-travel based thriller. In this instance, Bruce Willis's grizzled convict is replaced by a haunted-looking, relatively younger Aaron Stanford (*X-Men 2*), the time machine is slightly more reliable, and Brad Pitt's unhinged Jeffrey Goines is now Jennifer (Emily Hampshire).

For the most part, the tactic of changing things works well. Shorn of the knowledge of where things are headed, *12 Monkeys'* unpredictability works in its favour – second-guessing

things won't work here. The time-travel conundrums are woven intelligently into the story, creating a tale that is at times hard to keep up with, but always adept at keeping viewers on their toes.

Unfortunately, the cast can't quite keep pace with the scripts' ideas. Willis's Cole in the original film was a reluctant worker drone, staring on with a beleaguered expression as Pitt's Goines munched on the scenery. Stanford's Cole is less of an everyman – in fact, it's hard to pin down exactly what his motivation is. The current iteration of Goines is marginalised for much of this series too, effectively removing from play one of the material's strongest characters. Of the rest of the cast, only new inventions Jones (Barbara Sukowa) and Ramse (Kirk Acevedo, who seems to be in pretty much everything at the moment) really stand out.

Even so, there's enough good stuff in *12 Monkeys* to suggest that the story being told here is worth persevering with. With a second season confirmed, creators Travis Fickett and Terry Matalas will get that chance.

Steve Wright

SciFiNow scored 6 for 12 Monkeys
 Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...



Sleepy Hollow
 Further confirmation that fun, original storylines can be crafted from existing source material.





Season Four

ONCE UPON A TIME

Frozen gets an icy reception in Storybrooke

Details PG // 1,009 mins // **NETFLIX** // Out now **Creators** Adam Horowitz, Edward Kitsis
Cast Ginnifer Goodwin, Jennifer Morrison, Lana Parrilla, Josh Dallas, Robert Carlyle, Colin O'Donoghue, Emilie de Ravin **Distributor** ABC Studios



Once Upon A Time is not necessarily good. It's a camp soap opera that you can't quit. The CGI is ambitious but awkward, and the dialogue silly, but it has charm, which lives and dies on the ensemble of characters. Particularly deliciously devilish antiheroes like Regina (Lana Parrilla) and the spectacularly over-the-top Robert Carlyle as Rumplestiltskin.

Unfortunately, it crosses the line from endearing into just plain lazy. From the moment Elsa (Georgina Haig) emerges from an urn, it's clear the show is teetering on the brink of insanity.

The creators have spent three years making playful references to Disney films and characters. Reindeer reaction shots were a step too far, merely there to capitalise on the popularity of the unstoppable *Frozen* juggernaut.

That said *OUAT* might have wrapped on its best episode to date, 'Operation Mongoose'. The culmination of the search for The Author, the two-part finale sees heroes become villains, and plays with character back stories from the series' earlier seasons beautifully.



The Queens of Darkness pushing for their happily ever afters was a mixed bag. Cruella's weird dog-controlling powers and the woeful under-use of Ursula aside, the star was always going to be Kristin Bauer van Straten. The search for her lost daughter brings some heart to the darkness.

The Charmings didn't have much to do this year besides disappoint Emma, and Hook has become the big bad's plaything so many times he could take a leaf out of Hawkeye's book.

The strength of *OUAT* had been adding depth to characters that have been seen as good or evil; Snow White is a bandit, Red Riding Hood a werewolf, and the Evil Queen had her one true love snatched away from her.

The *Frozen* arc fell flat; audiences were too familiar with Anna and Elsa that it was too soon to start tinkering. The race to change the villain's fates got things back on track in the nick of time.

It's a season of two halves, but ends on such a high that you'll be forgiven for looking forward to Season 5 more than you may care to admit.

Krystal Sim

SciFINow scored **6** for
Once Upon A Time Season 4
Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Penny Dreadful
Darker in tone, but another series that tries something new with established literary characters.



MOONDIAL

A dip into the BBC's fruitful past

Details PG // 158 mins // **DVD** // Out now **Creator** Helen Cresswell
Cast Siri Neal, Tony Sands, Jacqueline Pearce **Distributor** BBC



The beauty of forgotten classics are that they feel personal to you, and the BBC really do specialise in them.

They've probably been a part of everyone's childhood in one way or another, and have had more than its fair share of lost gems, not least because they used to discard some recordings after they'd been aired.

Finding a bygone BBC series feels particularly like unearthing a treasure that means something to someone, and so it's easy to get excited about a show such as *Moondial*.

It's fitting really that *Moondial* should centre around lost discoveries of its own. Minty, played by Siri Neal, is a teenager staying with her aunt when her mother falls into a coma. She spends her days brooding around the grounds of a nearby mansion, when one day she notices a *Moondial* that enables her to travel back in time. The story revolves around Minty trying to save a young girl called Sarah from an evil scheme, with the help of a servant boy, Tom.

The series takes on an effortlessly Gothic feel, from the ageless manor house setting and midnight magic of the titular moondial, to the show's poetic fascination with ghosts, whether Minty's discussing them in the present-day gardens,

making friends with them in the past or even wondering what might happen to her mother in the future. It's a show that presents mature questions through the format of a children's story, and Minty's travels between now and then help keep the excitement fresh for a young audience.

As well as standing the test of time story-wise and employing engaging child actors – particularly Tony Sands, who plays Tom – *Moondial* also thrives on the nostalgia front. It's certainly a product of its time, from the synthesiser-led score to the soap opera-esque direction of some scenes, but that's the joy of watching *Moondial* with hindsight.

It only lasted six episodes – some would point to the BBC's rumoured hatred of science fiction in those days – and that's probably what makes it more of a forgotten classic than most. *Moondial* is good enough to watch a first time around 25 years later, but it's better if you remember early Nineties children's TV.

Mark White

SciFINow scored **7** for
Moondial
Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Magician's House
The Magician's House follows three children discovering the secrets of a 16th Century mansion.

STAR WARS: ARMADA

Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games // Players: 2
// RRP: £79.99

After the huge success of *Star Wars: X-Wing* and *Star Wars: Imperial Assault*, Fantasy Flight Games is back with another fantastic new game.

The original *X-Wing* was a fast-paced dog-fighting simulator that pitted a variety of Rebel and Imperial ships against each other in tense fights. *Armada* features far larger ships, and as a result the structure of the game is very different. You're still having intense dogfights in space, but there is far more strategy involved, with a few puzzle elements thrown in for good measure. It still mimics *X-Wing* in part, but it also feels like its own distinct, grander game.

The first thing you'll notice about *Armada* is the new movement device that has been introduced, called the Maneuver Tool. It's a weird, many-segmented device that helps determine the movement, trajectory and facing of your ships. The Command Dials that were present in *X-Wing* are still used, and you continue to plan your moves in secret so that you can hopefully outfox your opponent and put your larger ships into more convenient positions. The Command Dial gives you four

1 OBSTACLES

There are a number of different obstacles in the game, ranging from asteroid fields to space stations. Don't crash into them!

2 SHIPS

Annoyingly there are only three main ships in the game, but they're all rather lovely and incredibly well detailed.

3 RANGE RULER

In addition to being used to show movement for squadrons, this also determines whether your lasers will reach nearby ships.

5 COMMAND DIALS

These are used to decide your ship's moves. Bigger ships have more.

6 SHIP CARDS

All the stars you'll need when playing. Each model has two different cards, allowing for more variety.

7 TOKENS

Tokens are used for everything from making objectives to showing the current round or what a ship's defence is.

8 ATTACK DICE

You'll need these to determine damage each round. Different coloured dice are more effective at certain distances.

9 CARDS

Damage cards hurt your ship, while the smaller upgrade cards give you weapons and characters from the *Star Wars* universe.

TOP FIVE

MAGIC: THE GATHERING BETA



1. BLACK LOTUS £9,999



2. UNDERGROUND SEA £4,000



3. MOX SAPPHIRE £2,650



4. VOLCANIC ISLAND £2,500



5. ANCESTRAL RECALL £2,000

4 SQUADRONS

There are two sets of squadrons: TIE Fighters and X-Wings. X-Wings are a little sturdier, and can take slightly more damage.

10 MANOUEVER TOOL

This fiddly looking device is used to track the movement of your larger ships.

different options, so there's always plenty of choice in each round. This is further compounded by the fact that many of the ships in the game have more than one dial, meaning you need to try and play your moves ahead (up to three in the case of the Star Destroyer). It's a lovely touch, and calls to mind a whole crew desperately trying to right a tactical manoeuvre after they realise they've been out-thought by a more nimble craft.

The other big change to *Armada* is the aforementioned squadrons, which can either move or attack in a single turn. It's frustrating that you can't use your existing *X-Wing* models (their ships are at different scales), and it's a shame that the new models aren't painted, but they at least create the right sense of scale during play. Squadrons are free of the larger movement dial too, meaning they can react much more quickly and potentially help overpower poorly placed ships. They're a superb addition, and while they lack the elegance of the *X-Wing* ships, it still gives the impression of nimbler craft going up against the slower behemoths.

Add in numerous cards that feature classic heroes and villains who can bolster your ship's abilities or highlight special conditions that activate upon receiving damage, and *Armada* proves to be a solid alternative to *X-Wing*. The high price will put some off, but *Star Wars* fans will be well served by another essential release.

BEST FOR: WAR-GAMING FANS

Elysium

Publisher: Space Cowboys // Players: 2-4 // RRP: £37.99

This new Greek-based board game from Space Cowboys combines a variety of different genres. Essentially, you play the role of a demigod who is trying to gain a place at Mount Olympus. You'll win by



securing the most victory points, but there are lots of different strategies that ensure *Elysium* continually evolves as you play.

Each of the five turns sees you choosing cards that give you a large number of different skills, from granting money and experience points to letting you mess with your opponents. Most cards only grant bonuses when they're not based in your *Elysium*, but you won't score points without moving cards there. This immediately puts you in a tricky position of risk versus reward that only intensifies as *Elysium* continues. It's one of the

highlights of the game, but does mean that it's a little more complicated than similar games such as *Splendor*.

Another good thing about *Elysium* is that only five of the eight available decks are used at any one time, ensuring the game will be different each time you play a new one. The decks are based around different gods, and we wouldn't be surprised if more are introduced as expansions in the future.

While *Elysium* takes a little while to warm to, its tight turn limits, well thought-out gameplay mechanics and lovely theme should win it a lot of fans.

BEST FOR: STRATEGY FANS

Dogs Of War

Publisher: Cool Mini Or Not // Players: 3-5 // RRP: £44.99

We've seen some odd combinations of genres while reviewing board games, but this interesting oddity from *Cool Mini Or Not* has them all beat. It's effectively a worker-placement game combined with *Tug O War*. It sounds strange, but once you tie it into the theme it actually works rather well.

Each round is effectively a series of battles (up to three) based on the number of participating players. Each person takes it in turn to place their figures on either side of the battle lines, possibly gaining additional bonuses depending on where they place their

captains. Bonuses range from securing money to earning extra men or war machines. You might also adjust the battle track, which will move back and forth as more players enter the fight.

Once everyone makes their moves, the winners of each battle are determined, and players then tot up their points. You'll also earn additional bonuses if you're on the winning side. While there are co-operative elements to *Dogs Of War*, you're ultimately trying to be top dog and secure the most points.



Dogs Of War is an incredibly simplistic game with truly impressive production values. It may be lacking in depth, but it's a lot of fun to play, and ultimately that's what really matters for a good, fun game.

BEST FOR: INTERMEDIATE GAMERS

Expansion Of The Month STAR WARS: IMPERIAL ASSAULT – GENERAL WEISS

Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games // Players: 2-5 // RRP: £14.99

The first of the many *Imperial Assault* items is the brand-new AT-ST piloted by General Weiss. As with the figures in the core set, it's beautifully detailed, and is a nice complement to the walker found in the base game. It's also far more powerful, and comes loaded with some deadly weapons.

It also includes two Deployment Cards, three Agenda Cards, six Command Cards and two Skirmish Mission Cards, which will give the Imperial Player some much-needed muscle. He's quite high costing, so you'll have to think carefully when using him.

Do You Remember? HEROQUEST: RETURN OF THE WITCH LORD

The witch is back

Milton Bradley's *HeroQuest* was extremely popular during the Nineties, spawning numerous expansion packs. One of the best was arguably *Return Of The Witch Lord*, which pitted you in a number of quests against one of the game's most powerful enemies. While it didn't add any new monsters, it loaded up on existing undead, giving the player access to mummies, zombies and skeletons. It also added a number of cool new items to enhance your dungeons. The best part, however, was the excellent new ten-stage quest, which really pushed players to their limits as they delved into the depths of Kalos to finish off the fiend once and for all.



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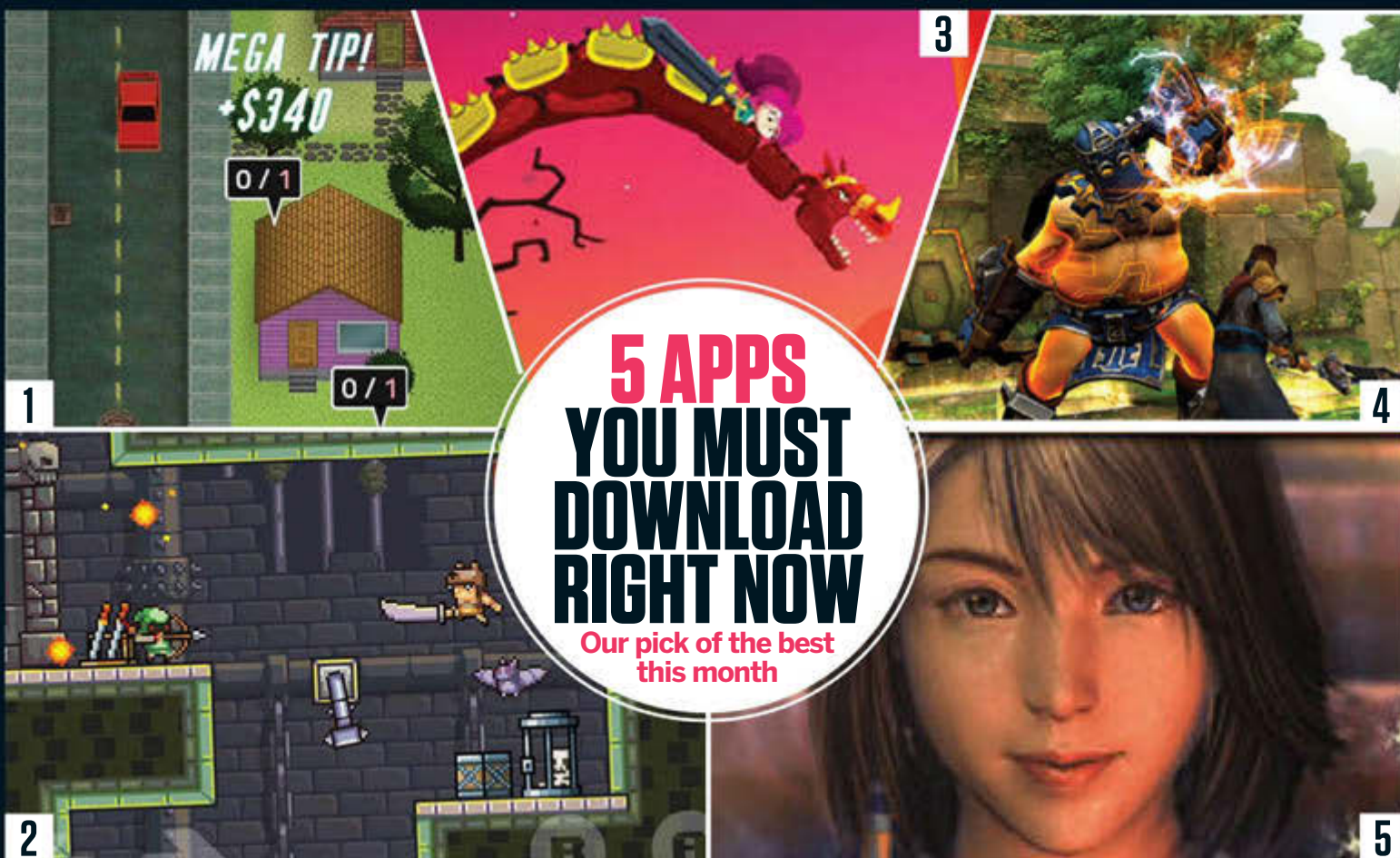
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Our pick of the best
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BEST FOR: PIZZA PEOPLE



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BEST FOR: SHINING KNIGHTS



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BEST FOR: DRAGON DIVAS



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BEST FOR: QUEST FIENDS



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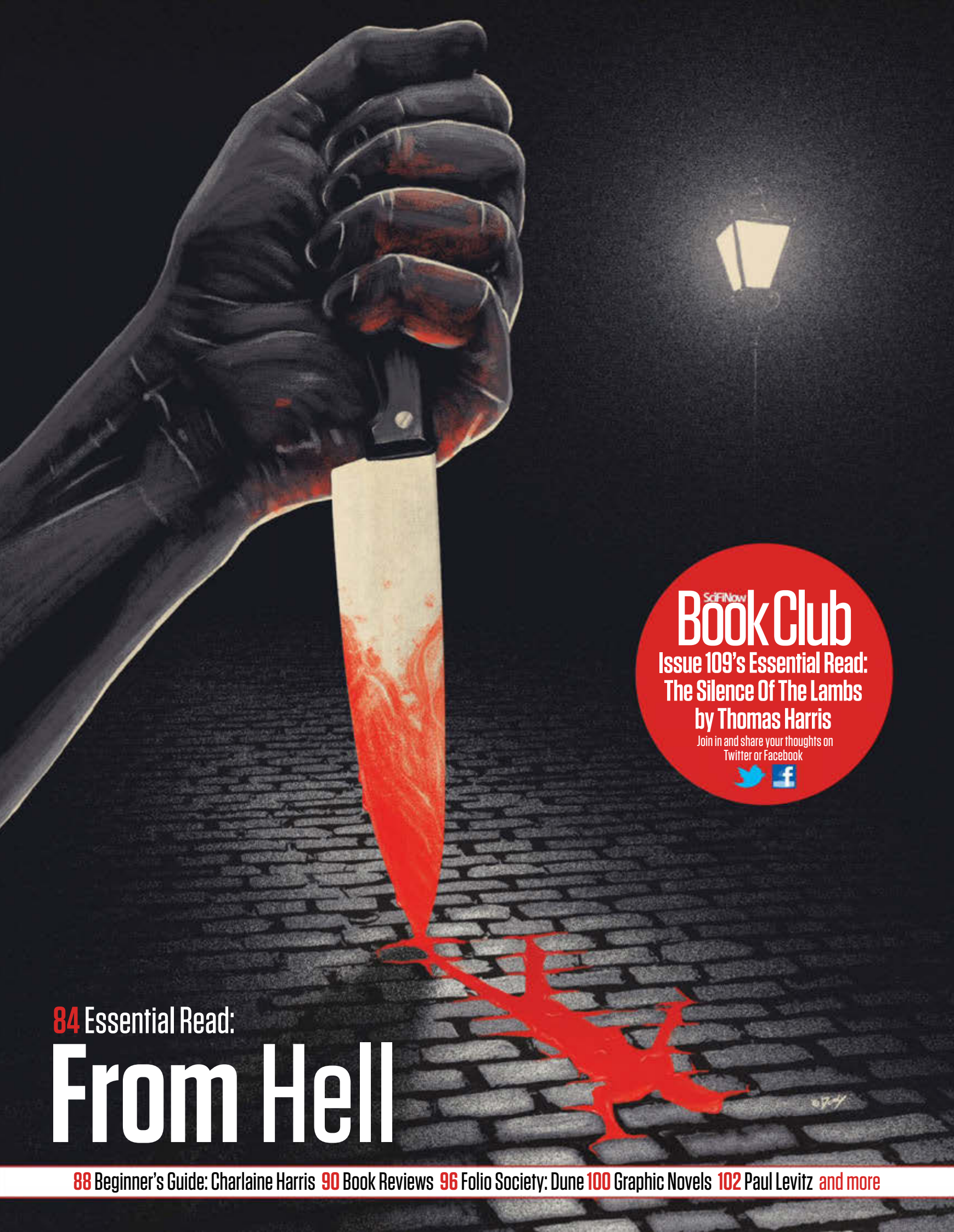
PRICE: FREE
FOR: IOS/ANDROID



5 *Final Fantasy* fans are in for a treat with the franchise's latest offering. When darkness falls, bringing catastrophe and ruin in its wake, only you and your team can restore its harmony. *Record Keeper* lets you relive your favourite *FF* memories and fight battles with the iconic Active Time Battle system, as well as create your ultimate team to build the kingdom back to its former glory.

BEST FOR: FANTASY FANS





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From Hell

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Essential read: From Hell

Alan Moore changed comics forever with *Watchmen*, but his artistry reached new heights with an epic deconstruction of Jack the Ripper's gruesome reign of terror

WORDS MATTHEW HANDRAHAN



SYNOPSIS

Life in Victorian London is nasty, brutish and short, and few have harder lives than the women who walk its streets at night. Murder

is an ever-present threat, a calculated risk, but nobody can remember any crime as vicious as that visited upon poor Mary Nichols. Throat slit, stomach sliced open – butchered, like an animal.

But who, or what, could act with such savagery? As physician to no less than Queen Victoria herself, Sir William Gull has the knowledge to conduct this sordid business. But even the Queen, who has her own reasons for wanting to see those women dead, fails to grasp the true gravity of what is about to occur. Only Gull and his loyal driver John Netley will ever know the truth. And if there were any risk of five dead prostitutes causing so much fuss, Gull has the perfect story to send Fleet Street's way when the bodies are found – a letter signed, "From Hell."

Looking back over the last few decades in comics, *Watchmen* feels like a beginning: a new dawn for the medium in creative terms, and the full emergence of perhaps its most important and celebrated artist. The history of comics is now divided into pre-*Watchmen* and post-*Watchmen*, a situation Moore had hoped would be the result of his attempt to pull apart the form. The problem was that he never intended it to be the beginning; it was designed to be the end.

Growing up in post-industrial Northampton, comics were a form of escapism for the area's young: cheap, eminently shareable and crammed with power fantasies from cover to cover. "If you were working-class, you had comics," Moore recalled in an interview with the AV Club. "It was like rickets."

By the time he started poking and prodding at the themes that would form the basis for *Watchmen*, it's fair

to say that Moore had grown weary of superheroes. They had dominated comics when he was a child, they had dominated his creative output since he found paid work as a writer in the late Seventies, and there was no clear sense of how their dominance would be weakened or eroded. Moore's work on *V For Vendetta* and *Swamp Thing* was supposed to illustrate all the depth and moral complexity that had, until that point, been ignored. *Watchmen* was intended as the last word on the matter, forcing the medium to finally move beyond superheroes as its ruling class.

If anything, the success of *Watchmen* had the opposite effect. Moore's work was critically admired and commercially successful, but intention and response were misaligned.

"Me and Frank Miller have got a lot to answer for," Moore lamented to *The Idler*. "When I did *Watchmen*, I thought, 'Great, people are going to feel compelled to look at the clever storytelling involved and they'll feel compelled to match me or better me in coming up with ways for telling stories. But instead, it seems what most people saw was the violence, the grimness, the layer of atheist pessimistic politics that was glossed over it.'"

The celebrity status it earned him soon became a burden. Hearing Moore's own account of his appearances at conferences and public events after *Watchmen's* publication in 1986 is reminiscent – admittedly to a far lesser extent – of Bob Dylan's experiences as a folk superstar in the mid-Sixties. For a relatively small group of incredibly passionate people, Alan Moore had become something of a preacher.

"Everybody suddenly starts treating you as if you're on some different level, so you can't really communicate with them," he told *The AV Club*. "I started to feel very alienated and very strange, so I stopped going to conventions altogether, or doing public appearances. I didn't really sign up to be a celebrity; I only signed up to be a writer."

Based on the way *Watchmen* was received, Moore could imagine a future in which his legacy was not to his liking. Rather than exposing the fact that a huge number of meaningful stories could not be told in superhero comics, his work could as easily become the reason why superhero comic writers took a more self-serious approach. You didn't need a swamp monster to discuss the environment. You didn't need a theatrical vigilante to explore politics and society.

He was increasingly convinced that you didn't need the commercial comics industry either. The attention and emphasis heaped upon *Watchmen* was also out of sync with another crucial aspect of Moore's experience: the money he and his artists received for their efforts. Despite delivering what has been compared to *Citizen Kane* in terms of its place in the development of comics, Moore and artist Dave Gibbons received less than eight per cent of all the money earned from *Watchmen's* sales and memorabilia. At first, the money they did receive was enough to distract two Brits finally getting their first taste of a real pay day, but it soon became clear just what they had willingly surrendered to DC Comics when they signed the deal.

"And then you think, 'Hang on, eight per cent from a 100 per cent leaves 92 per cent.' And that, as far as we can see, DC have taken as payment for editing mistakes into *Watchmen*..." Moore said in a 1987 interview, reprinted in *The Comics Journal*. "In one instance they cut up balloons, leaving a word out so it no longer makes any sense. I don't want to get into an embittered rant, but we're barely getting anything from the merchandising. What we do get is a fraction."

By this time, Moore's mind had already begun to wander towards

"THE CONCEPT OF LONDON AS A WEB OF SIGNS AND SIGNALS BECAME A REALLY USEFUL TOOL" ALAN MOORE



Your Take On The Classic

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"I'm surprised no one in London has set up the pentagram tour that Gull goes on. Although it'd probably take 24 hours to do it now!" @neil_bomb



"I'm one of those freaks who love Alan Moore but don't like *From Hell* at all!" @Scullywen



"Dark, dense, powerfully imaginative. Not an easy read but a rich one." @jhenrybenmore



"Haven't read it yet, but now I'm planning to :)" @MrAlbiP



"A great book and a great doorstop! Took me a week to read the comic & then 2 more weeks to read the annotations!" @iutley73



"From Hell is pretty much a one-off in successfully translating history into speech bubbles. #IMHO"

@doctorfodder



"One of the most truly intense and absorbing graphic novels ever. A harrowing but fascinating work. #BookClub"

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"One of my favourite graphic novels! Fascinating subject matter, wrapped up in a brilliant conspiracy theory. I absolutely love it!" @lunchbox1977



"What a great retelling of one of history's worst crimes – a gripping gothic tale that will be timeless and shows how great comics are." @chrisdav



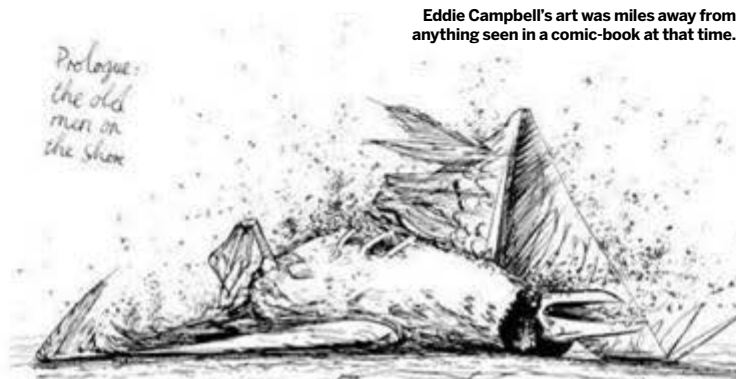
"Took a stroll through Spitalfields last week... it's a great scene, left brain versus right brain, Gull preaching about spirituality, Netley focusing on his troubled guts." @EmmetOC_



"When I read it, I was astounded by how much depth it went into. A genuine ripper theory that still holds up. Fascinating. #bookclub"

@robbrichardson

What do you think? Let us know on Twitter or Facebook



Eddie Campbell's art was miles away from anything seen in a comic-book at that time.

murder, though not specifically that visited upon the executives at DC. As much as his experience with *Watchmen* had soured his relationship with the most visible and lucrative part of the comics industry, Moore's response was, first and foremost, constructive. He would retaliate by exercising the sort of freedom that was illusory at the major publishers. The next book would be entirely his, and not only in terms of revenue share. Moore would show an industry increasingly concerned with 'graphic novels' exactly what a real graphic novel should be.

"I've no objection to the term 'graphic novel'," he said in an interview with *Locus* magazine in 2003, "as long as what it's talking about is actually some sort of graphic work that could conceivably be described as a novel. My main objection to the term is that usually it means a collection of six issues of *Spider-Man*, or something that does not have the structure or any of the qualities of a novel, but is perhaps roughly the same size."

The murder in question would be his subject, though Moore had no clear thoughts about which murder the book would depict; he just knew he wanted to explore it in unflinching detail. It would be less a follow-up to *Watchmen* than a natural evolution that had started with *V For Vendetta*, which had interrogated conventional notions of heroism, and the limits of heroic behaviour.

"Ever since I was writing *V For Vendetta*, it occurred to me that there's nobody in the history of the world who has ever thought of themselves as a villain," Moore said to *Slice* magazine in 2010. "Most supervillains give themselves names like Doctor Evil or something like that. I doubt that anybody has ever thought, 'Yes, I'm evil and I enjoy it.'"

"Most people, I'm sure even Hitler, were heroes in their own mind... looked at in that light, the concept of a hero does become quite a dangerous one."

Two books further influenced Moore. He noticed the first due to an entirely morbid anniversary: 1988 was the centenary of the murders committed by Jack the Ripper. Ripper paraphernalia was everywhere, including books from 'Ripperologists' that claimed to have discovered the true identity of history's most famous serial killer. Moore's interest was piqued by Stephen Knight's *Jack The Ripper: The Final Solution*, which proposed a conspiracy involving an illegitimate child, Queen Victoria's grandson, the Freemasons and five prostitutes who knew enough to be a nuisance to the crown. The Ripper, Knight said, was Sir William Gull, one of the Queen's personal physicians.

The second book was less obvious, but essential to what *From Hell* would prove to be. Iain Sinclair's *Lud Heat* used prose and poetry to extrapolate upon London's foundational myths, the building of Nicholas Hawksmoor's six London churches, and the "lines of influence" that run between them. It was an example of a field called 'psychogeography', unlike anything Moore had encountered before.

"[It] catalysed something within me... It brought a focus to it which I don't know, and probably never will know whether I could have achieved on my own," Moore said, as quoted by *The Quietus*. "There was an electricity with which he was engaging with the most microscopic level of meaning inherent in any place on any street corner. When I went into *From Hell*, the concept of London as a web of signs and signals became a really useful tool, in order to examine this series of quasi-historical, quasi-mythical series of events around the Whitechapel killings."

From Hell would be a long-form study not only of Gull, but society. Even the artwork thumbed a nose at convention: Eddie Campbell's images perfectly matched the tone and setting, while looking a million miles from anything a corporate publisher would print. The

"YEARS WADING THROUGH THE MATERIAL... NOT JUST JACK THE RIPPER, BUT ALL OF THESE FUCKERS" ALAN MOORE

The 2001 film adaptation characterised Moore's growing disenchantment with not having full creative control over his work.





first issue of *From Hell* was published in 1989. The last arrived in 1996.

"Years wading through the material, the literature, not just Jack the Ripper, but all of these fuckers," Moore said to *The Blather*, describing a cathartic creative process that nevertheless took him to some dark places. "All these miserable little apologies for human beings. They're not supermen. They're not supermen at all. They're not Hannibal Lecter. You know, they're Peter Sutcliffe, they're a bloke with a dodgy perm. They're little bokes."

It is possible to discuss Moore and never venture beyond the sequence of stories that started with *V For Vendetta* and ended with *Watchmen*. But Moore speaks of those years as if they were spent in a cage, restricted in what he could say and prevented from owning what he did create. In both content and execution, *From Hell* scarcely seems to belong in the world of comics, but that was the intention from the beginning.

"I've been content to work under those conditions for years, because [...] you have to go with them to get into the industry," Moore said in 1988. "I've now broken through to the real world... and I can now see what I've been swimming through for the past five or six years. It certainly isn't lavender water."

"These are the books I'm completely happy about. These are the ones I can look at with pride and not with a pang of, 'yeah, but I don't own it.'"

From Hell is available to download now from Comixology.



Where Have I Seen This Before?

THE KILLER INSIDE

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE

The corpse of Mary Ann Nichols was discovered in a Whitechapel alleyway on 31 August 1888, maimed with surgical precision. Around seven months earlier, Robert Louis Stevenson caused a sensation with his story of a psychologically fractured, murderous doctor. The press seized upon the parallels.

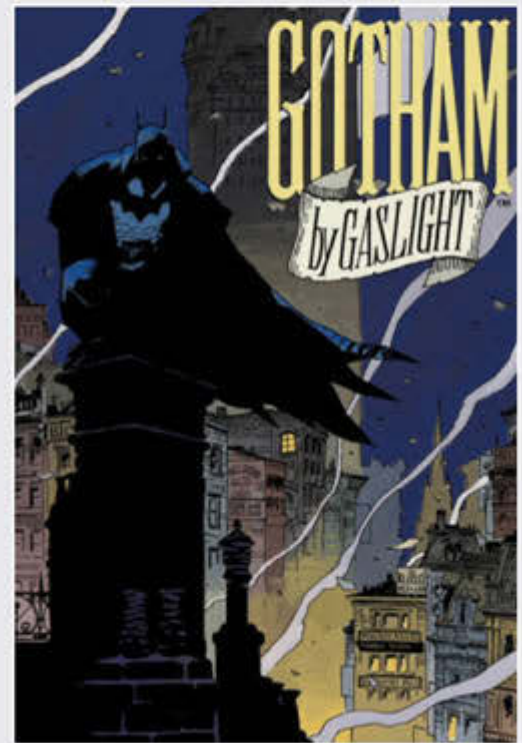


THE LODGER

Jack The Ripper has been the focus of dozens of books and movies, and a supporting player in countless more. Perhaps the most famous, though, is Mary Belloc Lowndes' *The Lodger*, which was first published in 1913. It is the source material for at least five different screen adaptations, including Alfred Hitchcock's silent film of the same name.

DOOM PATROL

Alan Moore and Grant Morrison are not the best of friends, a position that the former has been frank about in the press. Morrison, he says, has a tendency to imitate, with *Doom Patrol* just one example cited as evidence. Morrison introduced a new character called Red Jack, ostensibly Jack the Ripper, shortly after the first issues of *From Hell* were published.



GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT

Alan Moore probably wouldn't appreciate *From Hell* being used to spread the word about yet another superhero comic. However, Brian Augustyn and Mike Mignola's *Gotham By Gaslight* uses Victorian London and Jack the Ripper to provide a refreshing take on the darker Batman character popularised by Frank Miller.



PALESTINE

Alan Moore's antipathy towards the commercial comics industry is rooted in its failure to expand the form beyond superheroes. However, there was a great deal of important work being done, even in the early Nineties. If you liked *From Hell*'s gritty realism and social commentary, you should read anything by Joe Sacco, particularly *Palestine*.

PROVIDENCE

Even within Alan Moore's enviable body of work, the historical research in *From Hell* is truly remarkable, and it shows in the end product. And his new project, *Providence*, is built on a similar attention to period detail, this time for 1920's New England, home to the legendary horror author HP Lovecraft. Expect a vividly imagined blend of fact and fiction in this newly released title.





A Beginner's Guide To Charlaine Harris

All hail the vampire queen WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

Before she became a *New York Times* bestselling author and a goddess of modern vampire literature, Charlaine Harris was a lover of poetry, and wrote a fair few of her own based around ghosts and teenage angst. She also became something of a playwright while attending Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, before turning her attention to novels and having her first book – *Sweet And Deadly* – published in 1981.

But what really brought her to prominence as an author was her series *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*, also known as the *Sookie Stackhouse Novels*, which ran from 2001 to 2013 and consists of 13 books and almost 20 short stories and novellas. The books were so popular and well received that *Six Feet Under* creator Alan Ball turned them into a HBO series that we all now know as *True Blood*. Ball wrote and directed the pilot episode in

2008, and the show became an instant hit with both fans and critics. *True Blood* ran for seven seasons before finally coming to a close in 2014, a year after Harris finished writing the books.

Harris continues to write novels, focusing mostly on mystery and the supernatural. She has also dabbled in other formats, collaborating with other authors to compile anthologies and working closely with Christopher Golden and artist Don Kramer on a trilogy of graphic novels called *Cemetery Girl*.

Harris is very active in the writing community; counted as a member of the Mystery Writers Of America and the American Crime Writers League, a member of the board of Sisters in Crime and alternates with Joan Hess as president of the Arkansas Mystery Writers Alliance. She's also a former weightlifter and karate student and a senior warden of St James Episcopal Church.



Alan Ball's *Southern Vampire Mysteries* TV adaptation *True Blood* starred Anna Paquin as Sookie.

Which author would you like to see tackled next?

Let us know on Twitter or Facebook





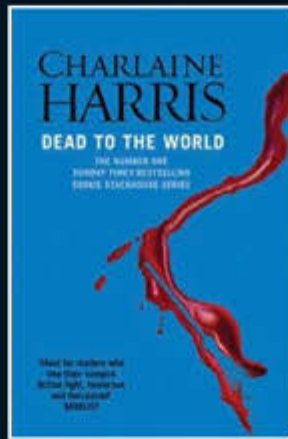
True Blood also starred Alexander Skarsgård as Eric Northman.



Harris was on board with the changes *True Blood* made, but didn't incorporate the new characters into her novels.



© bshopgirl



True blood pact

A vampire and a mind reader walk into a bar

DEAD UNTIL DARK
Publisher: Ace Books
Published: 2001
Price: £8.99

As the first in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* series, *Dead Until Dark* introduced us to Sookie Stackhouse in

2001. Sookie is a 20-something barmaid living in the small town of Bon Temps, Louisiana. She has a pretty normal life, besides the fact that she can read minds. But when a vampire named Bill Compton walks into her bar and she can't hear his thoughts, her world is turned upside down. It won the Anthony Award for Best Paperback Mystery in 2001, and kick-started the vampire craze.

“All of the Sookie Stackhouse books are way, way better than any season of *True Blood* ever was.” @QofTU

Super au naturel

American vampire story

DEAD TO THE WORLD
Publisher: Ace Books
Published: 2011
Price: £7.99

Sookie's story goes on for another 12 books, but book four, *Dead To The World*, is often cited

as being one of the best. The vampires are sexier, the – ahem – stakes are higher, and there are a whole load of devastating character deaths. Sookie's other vampire love interest, Eric Northman, is suffering from amnesia and needs her help to recover. But the new sweet and vulnerable and very, very pretty Eric is more than Sookie can handle and, as you can imagine, one thing leads to another...

“I loved it. Charlaine Harris creates the most interesting characters finding themselves in the most peculiar situations.” @alexwithlove

Before vampires

Aurora in the library with the lead pipe

REAL MURDERS
Publisher: Walker & Company
Published: 1990
Price: £7.99

Before Sookie Stackhouse there was Aurora Teagarden, a 28-year-old librarian and a member of the

Real Murders club, a group of murder enthusiasts who gather monthly to study unsolved crimes. But it all goes bottoms up when one of club's members is bludgeoned to death in exactly the same manner as the murder being discussed that month, and Aurora finds herself to be a suspect and a potential victim. *Real Murders* is a fun, character-oriented romp and the first novel in Harris's eight-part series.

“It's a compact, gripping story with an amazing voice. I love her mysteries #BookClub” @GillianRedfearn

Dead serious

Murder! Lightning! It's a little bit frightening!

GRAVE SIGHT
Publisher: Berkley
Published: 2005
Price: £6.99

Grave Sight, the first of four novels in the *Harper Connelly Mystery* collection, goes

back to the supernatural. Harper Connelly was a normal girl until she was struck by lightning at 15. Suddenly, she somehow acquired the power to sense dead people. She can seek out the bodies and see how they died, but when it comes to murder victims she draws a blank on the perpetrators. Ten years after her accident, Harper and her stepbrother Tolliver have set up a business charging customers who are in need of her special talent.

“A fast paced mystery that keeps you guessing & a heroine w/ unusual abilities in finding the dead. I absolutely loved it” @The_LizMarshall

Welcome to hell

Enjoy your stay – don't be a stranger!

MIDNIGHT CROSSROAD
Publisher: Ace Books
Published: 2014
Price: £8.99

After setting up camp in the mysterious town of Midnight, Texas, at the crossing of Witch Light

Road and Davy Road, Manfred Bernardo thinks he's found the perfect place to work in private. Boarded up windows are the norm in Midnight and the shops and diners are dried up and lifeless. But it isn't until he stays a while and learns the truth about the baffling town that Manfred realises just how wrong he was. The first in yet another, currently-being-published, series, there are still two more books to come.

“I loved it. Charlaine Harris creates the most interesting characters finding themselves in the most peculiar situations.” @alexwithlove



Your Five Cyberpunk Books

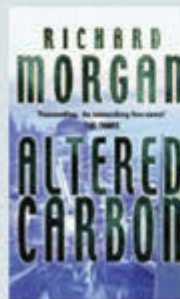
CHOOSE YOUR TOP FIVE
@SCIFINOW ON TWITTER



1. Feersum Enjinn

Iain M Banks

"Love the effortless sliding between the layers of realities. #BookClub"
@johnniewifi



2. Altered Carbon

Richard Morgan

"1st hard sci-fi I'd read for ages. Clever, gripping & violent, it felt like a @2000AD story in book form-loved it! #BookClub"
@iutley73



3. Pattern Recognition

William Gibson

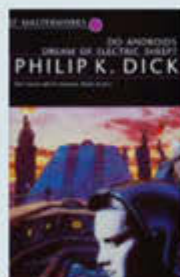
"Not sure if it's really cyberpunk, but I rate Pattern Recognition way above Neuromancer. #BookClub"
@RobinTriggs



4. Snow Crash

Neal Stephenson

"Stephenson uses words so well! Really well crafted #wordnerd #BookClub"
@dannithegeek



5. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Philip K Dick

"The novel my fave film used as inspiration. #BookClub"
@Evazorek

Details Author: Neal Stephenson Publisher: Borough Press Price: £20 Released: Out now

SEVENEVES

An interstellar epic

The mind can only absorb so much information. Unable to process a cataclysm of apocalyptic proportions, it focuses on small, mundane details instead, according to *Seveneves*. After the moon explodes, the President of the United States breaks the bad news that we're all doomed. Rather than listen to his speech, the celebrity scientist stood behind her wonders about the grey streak in the President's hair. Later, one of a few hundred survivors living on a International Space Station worries about a planning meeting, while Earth is a raging fireball below.

Readers of *Seveneves* may understand this feeling of information overload as they struggle to penetrate the detail-heavy prose of this interstellar epic. 'What do you expect from the author of *Snow Crash*?' fans will say, but those uninitiated should be warned.

Seveneves follows 5,000 years of human history; from the feverish race to escape Earth and the difficulties of surviving in space, to the eventual return to the planet that was once home. While this is a familiar trope made famous by the likes of *Battlestar Galactica*, there are no starships or

warp drives here. Set on a lifelike Earth humanity only has existing technology to adapt to living in space.

The fact that Stephenson was as an advisor for the Blue Origins asteroid mining company no doubt helped him write *Seveneves*. However, Stephenson has always been something of a polymath, so as well as elaborating on the engineering of the ISS, he writes knowledgeably about cutting-edge theories in biology, robotics, and more.

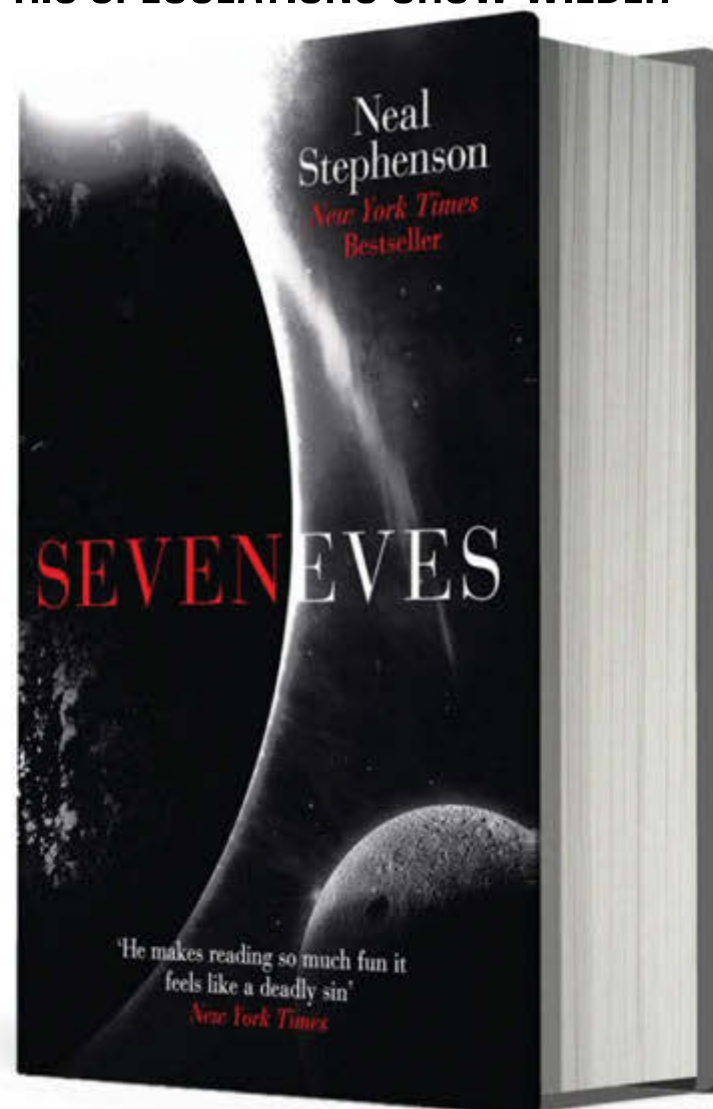
Stephenson's thorough research makes the plot seem believable, even as his speculations grow ever wilder as humanity adapts to living in outer space. It also helps explain the high stakes of the situation. However, these endless fact bombs can also be exhausting. When the author breaks out bullet points to detail the inner workings of a space habitat, the fun is sucked out of the novel faster than oxygen from a torn spacesuit.

Sadly, one area where he doesn't get bogged down in detail is characterisation. Given the scope, this is forgivable to an extent. But the bulk of the epic is told from the perspectives of just two characters: Doc Dubois, the celebrity scientist, and Dinah MacQuarie, an astronaut on the ISS. Dubois exists mostly as a mouthpiece to explain what's going on. The tragedy of him escaping Earth while his loved one are left behind is pointed out, but Stephenson avoids the messy business of emotional goodbyes, by just having it happen 'off the page.' Dinah stands in for the everywoman on the ISS, surrounded by eggheads (despite her own qualifications in geology and robotics). However, neither of them experience any real development, and every other character is a cardboard cut-out (action heroes, unemotional technocrats, conniving politicians, etc.)

It's thoroughly consummate work, and meticulously researched, but ultimately light on story.

Jack Parsons

"HIS THOROUGH RESEARCH MAKES THE PLOT SEEM BELIEVABLE, EVEN AS HIS SPECULATIONS GROW WILDER"



SciFiNow scored **6** for *Seveneves*

Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Forever Watch

David Ramirez

Hard sci-fi following a murder investigation on a generation ship that uncovers a larger conspiracy.



Details Author: Shaun Hutson Publisher: Caffeine Nights Publishing Price: £8.99 Released: Out now

MONOLITH

Bricks and slaughter

Shaun Hutson is, as ever, great with physically violent scenes. Blood and guts still fly, and bones are snapped like twigs. Nasty eviscerations await; it's great stuff for body horror fans. But *Monolith* – about a mysteriously evil building – simply doesn't have much more to offer beyond that.

The main characters aren't quite as one-dimensional as they could be,



but scenes with their families simply seem solely there to make you give a damn when the terrible things start to happen. The occasional echo chamber conversations feel less of a genuine interaction between two people and more of a space for Hutson to air his grievances about modern life. To this end, police are useless, hospital staff uncaring, and rich people are greedy idiots, while immigrants are expendable (this last one is admittedly more of a commentary on those that think that way).

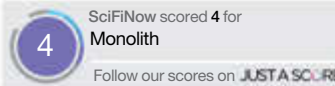
There's an air of unreality about the supporting cast, particularly as the story unravels. If one of the lead characters is angry that the NHS aren't doing enough for his dad, for example, sure enough we'll have an unlikely scene with some emotionally detached nurse getting exasperated at his bad language.

Evil people are evil. They'll have one primary motivation – greed or power or revenge – but beyond that, there's very little nuance to any of the bad guys. Likewise, good people are good, and unhelpful people are unhelpful, until it's time for them not

to be. There's never really any emotional drama or tension to a situation, despite almost every scene being riddled with physical tension; every character does exactly what they need to do to help the scene play out by the books, whether that's refusing to give information, suddenly deciding to help, or dying horribly. Often it's dying horribly.

While it's comforting in an incredibly readable way – the ridiculously short two-to-three-page chapters help with that – it's also predictable and riddled with grammatical errors, which in a way we don't entirely hate, reminding us as it does of proper pulp fiction, but it is frustrating. We hate to use the phrase, but it really is one just for the fans.

Rebecca Richards



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Shadow Over Innsmouth
HP Lovecraft
If you're eager for compelling supernatural horror, we can't recommend HP Lovecraft enough.

YOUR READS

What you lot have been reading this month



"*The Custard Protocol* by @gailcarriger. Love her books and the world she's created. #BookClub" @HarleyQuinn_Lon



"*Finders Keepers* by Stephen King, which is book 2 in *Mercedes* trilogy #amreading covered up in bed with popcorn. #BookClub" @book_bint



"*The Last Continent* by Terry Pratchett, brilliant as ever. #BookClub" @Dynvain



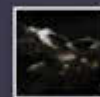
"*Apex* by @ramez It's very good :-). #BookClub" @spookshow71



"Just finished *1st Grave On The Left* series & now I'm bereft... Till the 19th then next book is due out. Which I've pre-ordered! #BookClub" @KlareRants



"*Galaxy Four* by William Emms, great to read an adaptation of a missing Who story. #BookClub" @quidditysea



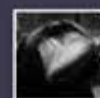
"About to read @AquilaRift *Poseidon's Wake*. Super excited to read this! #BookClub" @Craigsg1



"Reading a bit of *Hellboy: Wake the Devil*. A very interesting story. #BookClub" @Jbarnes532



"*The Machine Awakes* by @ghostfinder waiting to see which conspiracy turns out to be real, or whether they are connected. #BookClub" @Cascararogue



"Finishing *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. Has oddly dieselpunk feel to it, but it's not enjoyable really :(#BookClub" @TheCrowLady

Author: Nnedi Okorafor Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton Price: £18.99 Released: Out now

THE BOOK OF PHOENIX

This is how the world ends

Before you can have a post-apocalyptic world, you need an apocalypse. *The Book Of Phoenix* is the story of one such apocalypse: in a futuristic world where race relations are depressingly similar to our own, researchers have been messing with the DNA of an African girl thought to be Mitochondrial Eve, the ancestor of all humanity, in order to create X-Men style mutants. The Phoenix of the title is one such mutant. Living in an experimental facility dubbed 'Tower 7', her powers lie more or less dormant until the man she loves dies – and then all hell breaks loose.

The basis of the story is framed as a narrative being heard for the first time by one of the apocalypse's few survivors, but since there's more narrative than frame, you can more or less forget

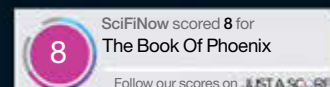
about that and just follow Phoenix on her voyage of self-discovery. Technically, this is a prequel to author Nnedi Okorafor's *Who Fears Death*, but that, too, can be mostly ignored as the story unfolds on its own terms. Phoenix is an eloquent storyteller, and her story is both personal and epic; she's both heroine and villainess as the scientists scabble desperately to contain their creation.

It's not hard to catch the Biblical parallels, as a special tree represents life and the stealing of an apple leads to terrible knowledge. But the scientists are hardly benevolent gods, and this is a story about the end, not the beginning, of the world. For a short novel, it's packed with ideas – and brimming over with rage. Phoenix's righteous anger isn't hard to sympathise with, even as she approaches her final, fateful decision.



Don't be fooled by the YA-sounding synopsis; this is something darker, more political, and far more original.

Sarah Dobbs



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

Who Fears Death
Nnedi Okorafor
Fans will want to pick up Okorafor's other novel set in Phoenix's universe.



60 SECONDS WITH

Sarah Lotz



Day Four is set in the same universe as *The Three*. Had you always thought about writing more novels in this world?

Yeah, what I wanted to do is write novels

that weren't necessarily a series, that you didn't have to read sequentially. You could read *Day Four* before *The Three* if you wanted, and if you put them together, you'd have all the answers to all the questions. So that was the idea, and I've always wanted to write something set on a cruise ship.

Was that the next logical step after the plane crashes of *The Three*?

I don't know if it was the next logical step, I just think when I was a kid I was just completely fascinated and horrified by *The Poseidon Adventure*, and I do find boats sort of terrifying: that whole thing of being on a holiday with people you just don't know, and then getting stranded with them.

Were you looking to do something with a smaller scope?

Yeah, it was that and that whole sense of claustrophobia. Doing this one, set kind of just in one location and focusing through fewer characters, it was actually more daunting weirdly, and that's why I think I was so nervous about the reception of it, because it's so different to *The Three*, even if it is in the same kind of pulp tradition.

There are supernatural goings-on, but the way the passengers behave is just as horrifying.

Well I mean, maybe I've got a really bad view of human nature, but I do actually think that is probably what would happen! I researched the Carnival Triumph, which is a cruise ship that was stranded in the Gulf Of Mexico for five days, and it became known as the Poo Ship because the toilets all blocked up. I did read a diary that somebody had written while they were on board, and almost everybody said that people did actually behave badly. The whole tension is between what is scarier, the supernatural element or human nature. When you are running

out of food, when you are panicked, when you don't know if you're ever going to get home.

Day Four by Sarah Lotz is out now, published by Hodder And Stoughton.

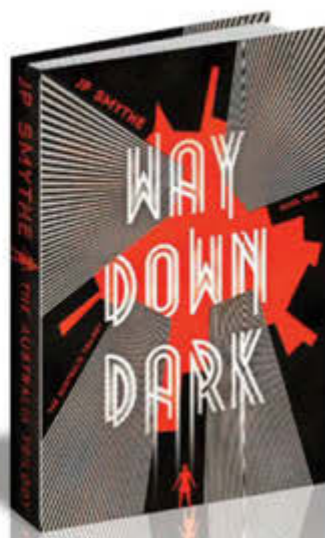


Details Author: JP Smythe Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton Price: £13.99 Released: 2 July

WAY DOWN DARK: AUSTRALIA BOOK 1

Highway to Hell

Stories are important in JP Smythe's latest novel, *Way Down Dark*. They are miniscule echoes of what once were on board Australia – a spaceship that left a barren Earth centuries ago to look for a new home, but was unable to find one.



The desperation is evident, and immediately you are thrust into the action with Chan, a teenage girl who must hold her own among frenzied, violent gangs after her mother dies. It's a disorientating opener, but Smythe has done well to paint such a forlorn, dystopian world, and this is where the narrative really shines, as it's easy to imagine climbing, breathing, smelling and feeling the ship in its entirety.

The imagery Smythe instils is excellent, but the bleak scenes are heavily contrasted by drawn-out fights that are un-descriptive and stall the flow of the narrative. You'd expect more when the idea of 'every fight is a battle for survival' is saturated throughout. As the narrator, Chan too is an obstacle for an intelligible plot, as she is simply too blunt and impatient. She does not provide any logical reasoning behind her decisions other than because she serves as a moral compass against all the barbaric savagery

However, it is Chan's mysterious relationship and dynamic with her quasi-guardian Agatha that helps to drive the story along. Agatha is a window into the past and present – an eye-opener into the real dangers and truths of a society that has lost its way. But she does not serve as a deus ex machina – she doesn't spend all her time saving Chan.

Still, the *Australia* series could prove to be unmissable. The ideas are there and set up the next book well, it's just that, too frequently, Smythe's brusque writing acts as a discord.

Carrie Mok



SciFiNow scored 4 for *Way Down Dark*

Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

The Unquiet
Mikaela Everett
Lirael has been trained her whole life to kill her parallel self and integrate seamlessly into her double's world.

Author: Clive Barker **Publisher:** MacMillan **Price:** £12.91 **Released:** Out now

THE SCARLET GOSPELS

Lord of Contusions

If any one character has defined Clive Barker as a writer, it's Pinhead. The demon from his *The Hellbound Heart* novella has gone on to star in nine films and several comics, and one of the great pleasures of *The Scarlet Gospels* is the sense of an author reclaiming ownership over one of his creations.

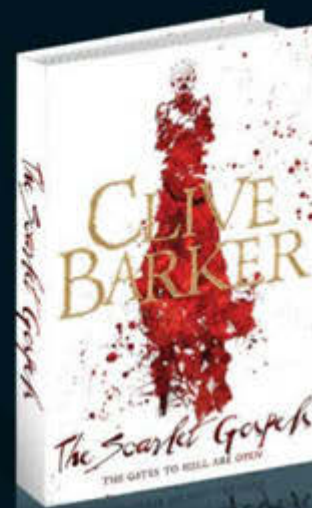
The book finds the Cenobite Priest (shockingly, he's not fond of the Pinhead nickname) literally tearing through the world's magicians. When supernatural PI Harry D'Amour (another of Barker's recurring characters) comes across him, he's caught up in the demon's attempts to conquer Hell, and will have to venture into the Inferno.

The Scarlet Gospels gets off to a hell of a start (sorry, not sorry), as a group of arrogant magicians try to come up with a plan to escape Pinhead before he arrives and puts them through the kind of torture that takes you right

back to Barker's early work. There's a terrific energy and an eagerness to remind readers just what his villain is capable of; Pinhead is cruel and his punishments are entirely horrifying. By contrast, Harry's journey is breezy fun – although his first encounter with a demon will not be forgotten in a hurry – until he's forced to enter Hell.

Unfortunately, it's here that the book starts to lose steam. Barker creates a political hierarchy for a functioning Hell, but tears it apart so quickly that it feels like you have wasted your time, especially as it's followed by an extended chase sequence that drags its feet. Similarly, Harry's band of heroes aren't as endearing as they're intended to be and their levity sits in odd contrast to Pinhead's brutality. There's some striking imagery, however, and Barker still finds ways to cut through the familiarity of demons squabbling in the absence of Lucifer.

True to form, *The Scarlet Gospels* is skin-crawling and shocking, it's just a



shame that the lead-up to the main event drags. That being said, fans of Barker should definitely read this.

Jonathan Hatfull



SciFiNow scored 8 for *The Scarlet Gospels*

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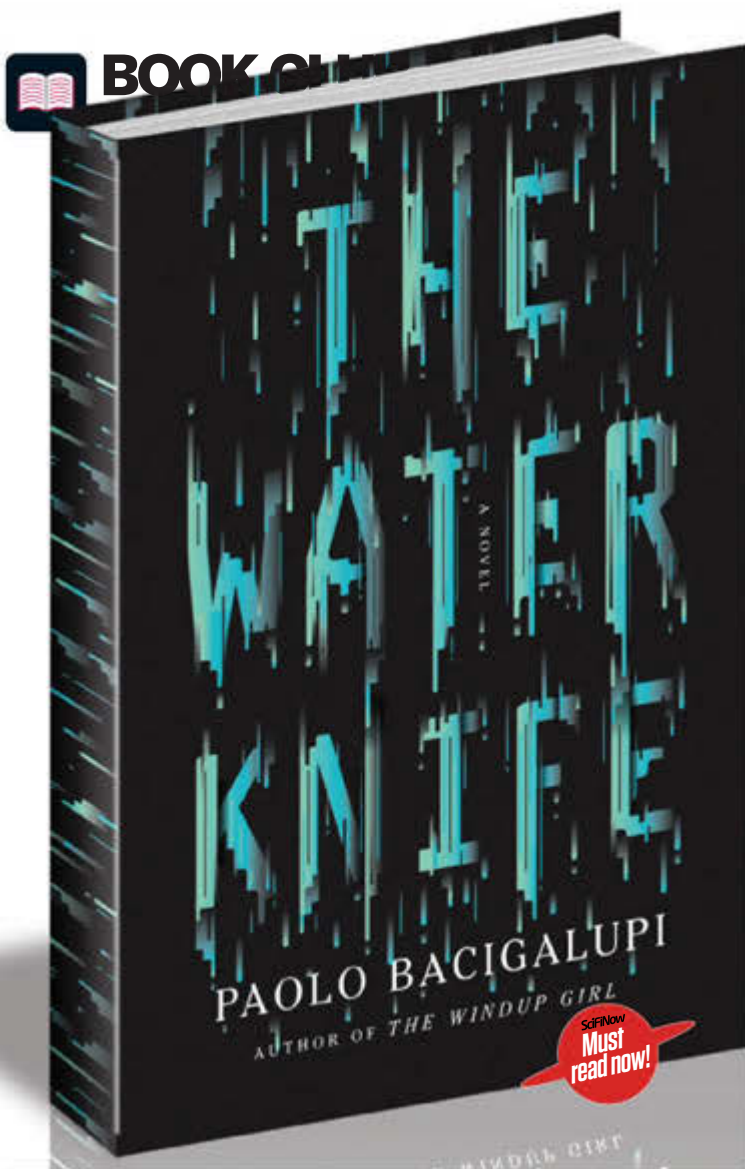
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Details Author: Paolo Bacigalupi Publisher: Orbit Price: £14.88 Released: Out now

THE WATER KNIFE Carving up America

On his acclaimed novel *The Windup Girl*, Paolo Bacigalupi returns to science fiction with this disturbingly plausible and entirely gripping near future tale.

America is ravaged by drought. As the lakes dry and the rivers slow to a dribble, the entire south of the country is divided up into states as the notion of national identity is thrown out of the window. Angel is a 'Water Knife', an enforcer for the incredibly powerful Nevada water magnate Catherine Case.

When Catherine sends Angel to Phoenix, Arizona to relieve his colleague, he finds a city in its death throes. He also finds himself caught up in the hunt for a mysterious contract that people are willing to kill for. Together with journalist Lucy Monroe, Angel struggles to navigate the killers, the politicians, and those just trying to stay alive.

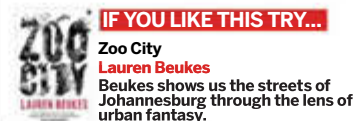
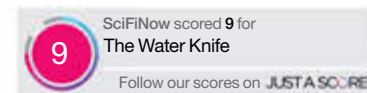
It's hard to read *The Water Knife* and not think about how timely it feels. With their most precious resource running out, communities crumble as everyone starts looking out number one. Wealth is denoted by water features, bathing and laundry are luxuries. Despite the harsh

realities and occasional violence, there is hope to temper this view of humanity.

There's some excellent hardboiled roots on display here too, beyond the contract MacGuffin. We meet Angel as he's en route to blowing up a facility, which will ruin countless lives, but he's a fascinating character who's more complicated than his job suggests. Similarly, Lucy's stoic determination to see the story through and her growing realisation that she can no longer separate herself from her subject makes for compulsive reading.

The Water Knife is intricate but accessible, tough but humane. This is superb science fiction that you need to read as soon as possible.

Jonathan Hatfull



Details Author: Al Robertson Publisher: Gollancz (Orion) Price: £20 Released: Out now

CRASHING HEAVEN

Hugo Fist pulls the strings

After *Earth* has been abandoned, all that remains of humanity now inhabits an industrialised asteroid known as the Station. Jack was born and bred here; his childhood was spent exploring the Docklands, while his adult life found him in the midst of a great war. After the war, and after being labelled a traitor, Jack returns home with his new constant companion, Hugo Fist.

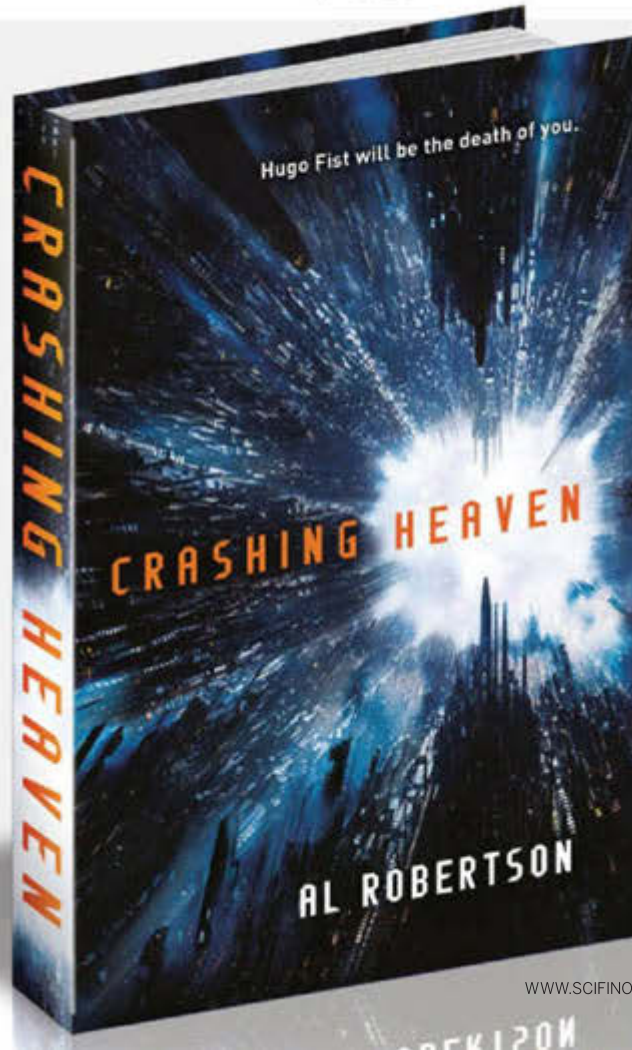
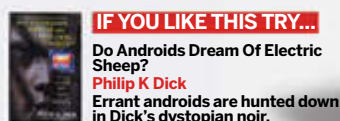
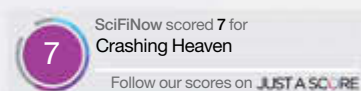
Hugo Fist – a virtual puppet that's been implanted into Jack's mind – is what really gets the story going. Designed to destroy the Totality, Station's enemy, Fist is perhaps the most terrifying AI to set foot on the Station. It's not just the Totality that's destined to succumb to this charismatic character.

It's a pretty disheartening story, and with such a lot of complex elements, *Crashing Heaven* demands a lot of its readers. It's impossible to step lightly into this novel, and you really

do have to drag yourself through the opening pages before you find yourself engaging with the story. Once you've overcome the initial hurdle, the prose flows eloquently, and the interaction between Jack and Fist is engaging. It's this unique relationship that really makes Robertson's story stand out.

If you're looking for an easy-to-read, pick-up, put-down kind of book, this isn't for you. With an intense, evolving plot and deep, complex characters, Robertson's novel is an unavoidable commitment until the very end.

Philippa Grafton



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The Spice Is Life

Sam Weber tells us about creating art for The Folio Society's 50th anniversary edition of *Dune*

WORDS JONATHAN HATFULL

It's been 50 years since Frank Herbert gave us his staggering literary masterpiece *Dune*. Since then, we've witnessed its influence on writers, artists and filmmakers, as many have tried to conjure, recreate or reinvent the spirit of this defining work. Now, The Folio Society has delivered a beautiful 50th anniversary edition with beautiful artwork by Sam Weber.

"Sam is amazing at painting a plausible alternative reality," says Sheri Gee, art director at The Folio Society. "We'd been so impressed with his previous commissions for us, but even more so by Sam's wider portfolio, which showed a clear love of all things strange. I thought it would make for a really interesting commission. In all, he was the perfect choice for *Dune*, and we were blown away when we not only said he'd love to work on it for us, but it is also his favourite book."

We asked Weber to talk us through the challenge of translating Herbert's world.

"On a scale of one to ten, with one being the least daunting and ten being crushingly, staggeringly daunting, I'd say it was a solid nine. Not only is *Dune* an iconic novel; it's also one of my absolute favourites, which made things extra tricky. I wanted to do this amazing novel justice, and had to come to grips with the reality that some images would inevitably fall short of what I was imagining or hoping for."





"The world-building feels vast, and I think his approach to technology (or the lack thereof) has really insured its place as a timeless classic. The ecological themes are sadly more relevant today than they were 50 years ago."



"It's interesting to see a character come to life before you. Sometimes the actual execution can fall short, but in other instances, the final result can sometimes feel even more real than what I was able to imagine while reading the book."



Visions of Dune

How Frank Herbert's classic has lived on in popular culture



David Lynch's Dune (1984)

One of the greatest living directors took a running jump at *Dune* with this disappointing, sluggish and overstuffed film.



Brian Herbert and Kevin J Anderson (1999-present)

Herbert's son and Anderson continued the series, further exploring its rich universe.



Frank Herbert's Dune (2000)

This Syfy miniseries, starring William Hurt and Ian McNeice, was an attempt at a faithful adaptation of the novel.



Children Of Dune (2003)

Following the success of their first miniseries, Syfy adapted *Dune Messiah* and *Children Of Dune* into a three-part drama.



Jodorowsky's Dune (2013)

The *Dune* that never was is the subject of a documentary. Alejandro Jodorowsky could have made something special...



The Folio Society's 50th Anniversary Edition of Frank Herbert's *Dune* is available now.

"I think some of that has to do with my own strengths, weaknesses and interests as an artist. I've always been drawn to characters and portraits, and try to treat a lot of my paintings as the former. I also really wanted to try and create a vision of *Dune* that was at least in some ways different from what had been done before. Choosing scenes and vantage points that allowed me to indulge my own interests became one of the ways I tried to solve that."



BOOK CLUB

Spider-Verse/Edge Of Spider-Verse // The Thrilling Adventures Of Lovelace And Babbage // Thor: The Goddess Of Thunder

Details Writers: Dan Slott/Various Artists: Olivier Coipel, Giuseppe Camuncoli
Publisher: Marvel/Panini **Price:** £14.99/£10/99 **Released:** Out now

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN: SPIDER-VERSE/EDGE OF SPIDER-VERSE

Putting our Web-Heads together

Dan Slott's cheery emptying out of the toybox continues to an every more ridiculous degree as Spider-Folk from across the Multiverse gathered together to battle Morlun's stylish dimension-hopping vampire clan.

Old favourites like 2009's Miguel O'Hara, Miles Morales and, er, Spider-Monkey – as well as 616 Spider-stalwarts like Spider-Woman – are joined by some soon-to-be classic new creations like the shit-kicking Spider-Punk, Captain Britain Corpsman Spider-UK and the break-out Spider-Gwen, an alt-universe Gwen Stacy from a world where she was bitten, Peter Parker died and she drums in a band called The Mary-Janes. Already, she's fêted to join DC's new-look lippgloss Batgirl as the Tumblr heroes of the last 12 months.

The plot itself is standard Marvel event stuff, with lots of everyone coming together for big fights against the odds, but with Peter Parker being so damn Peter Parker it's an opportunity for some character moments that remind you why he's so much more than web-fluid, wall-crawling and wisecracks.

Edge Of Spider-Verse is a total aside, but a welcome one collecting largely standalone offerings with the extended Spider-cast, and written by the likes of



Jason Latour, David Hine and My Chemical Romance frontman Gerard Way. The Spider-Gwen story, with frantic art from Robbi Rodriguez is a highlight, but so is the unexpected 'I Walked With A Spider', which redoes Spidey's origin story as a stomach-churning Cronenbergian body horror.

James Hoare

SciFiNow scored 7 for Spider-Verse
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SciFiNow scored 6 for Edge Of Spider-Verse
 Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
Exiles Vol 1
 Judd Winick/Mike McConne
 Familiar faces from alternate universes team-up for Marvel's Sliders



Details Writer: Sydney Padua Artist: Sydney Padua **Publisher:** Penguin
Price: £16.99 **Released:** Out now

THE THRILLING ADVENTURES OF LOVELACE AND BABBAGE

Code and prejudice

The world of proto-computer engineer Charles Babbage and prodigious mathematician Ada Lovelace is fascinating in itself. Cartoonist Sydney Padua barely has to stray far from truth with her steampunk-flavoured retelling of their lives, creating vast reams of dialogue from their letters and essays, and peopling this Victorian alt universe with a cast of members of era's great and good, from Isambard Kingdom Brunel to Queen Victoria herself.

It's a world as colourful, idiosyncratic and absurdly detailed as Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill's *League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, but rather than rooted in literature, this is a blink away from reality – forever a hop, skip and jump away from history and

the vast epoch-defining clockwork computer we never saw.

James Hoare

SciFiNow scored 8 for The Thrilling Adventures Of Lovelace And Babbage
 Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)



Details Writer: Jason Aaron Artists: Russell Dauterman, Jorge Molina
Publisher: Marvel/Panini **Price:** £10.99 **Released:** Out now

THOR: THE GODDESS OF THUNDER

Light(ning) weight

That 'Thor is a woman' turned misogynists a Malekith-shade of purple is enough to make you feel warmly predisposed to *Thor*, but it's just not enough.

There's definitely a sense now that after his thunderous initial arc on the book, bearded wildman writer and probably a Norse god-alike Jason Aaron has lost momentum thanks to what look like editorially mandated plot points; first the return of Malekith to coincide with *Thor: The Dark World*, and now the debut of the all-new lady-Thor.

There's a lot of torch-passing and some nice moments, but they don't carry a whole story, while the 'mystery' of her true identity, a constant internal monologue ridden with self-doubt and the return of the 'I say they nay's is a

little bit too Silver Age for a book that's so dense with background strife and unfolding drama.

James Hoare

SciFiNow scored 4 for Thor: Goddess Of Thunder
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THE REAL MAN OF TOMORROW

Having helped turn DC into the creative powerhouse it is today, fans have a lot to be thankful to Paul Levitz for. We speak to the former DC Comics president about the past, present and future...

WORDS ABIGAIL CHANDLER

SciFiNow | 103



Even though he isn't part of editorial anymore, his work lives on.

➤ mischievously. "But I wasn't going to hand [the awards] back."

Certainly, much of Levitz's standing within the industry is courtesy of his work towards creating royalty systems and standard-written talent contracts that changed the face of comics, both legally and creatively. "I don't think it's a coincidence that we institute royalties in 1981, and within two or three years of that you really get a tremendous flurry of creativity within the field," Levitz says.

"DC was not unique; some of the small, independent presses at the time started to do things, but we were the first large established business that was saying, 'Look, authors get royalties, children's book artists get royalties, when you work on a motion picture or television series you get residuals. If you give creative people a stake in their work, you give them an incentive to reach further, put more time in.' A lot of the work still remained routine, and a lot of the work remains routine today. But people bet on themselves, and that's how you get the best. I don't think you would have had Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns* or *Watchmen*, naming just DC projects, or the tremendous range of creator-owned stuff that exists today if you hadn't moved to a system where people could win."

Levitz's interest in improving people's lives goes beyond the creators he's been

able to help out directly. When we ask him if comics themselves offer the possibility of humanitarian acts, his response is firm: "I think every writer has not only the possibility, but the obligation. You put into your stories, sometimes subtly, sometimes unsubtly, things that make people think. Some of them are remembered years and years later. I think I wrote either the first or one of the first stories about a lesbian couple of superheroes who appeared in the *Legion [Of Super-Heroes]*. I think I wrote possibly the first gay marriage of superheroes in the traditional DC Universe, again in the *Legion* some years later.

"When you show things like that and you treat the people involved as though they're normal and this is normal life, and this is how things ought to be, you have some, maybe tiny, effect on humanity. When you tell a story about what it means to be a hero, maybe you reach somebody and tell them to stretch themselves a little bit beyond what their bounds are. Any writer has hidden within their stories something of their morality, something of their politics, something of their philosophy. So hopefully I'm a decent human being, or a mostly decent human being, and some of that has leaked through the stories and touched people's lives."

Over his career, Levitz has seen the comic-book industry change dramatically.

RORSCHACH'S JOURNAL. OCTOBER 13TH 1985. 11.30 P.M.:

**IF YOU GIVE CREATIVE
PEOPLE A STAKE IN
THEIR WORK, YOU GIVE
THEM AN INCENTIVE TO
REACH FURTHER**
PAUL LEVITZ

ON FRIDAY NIGHT,
A COMEDIAN DIED
IN NEW YORK.

NOBODY
CARES.

NOBODY
CARES BUT
ME.



He's "gotten to write almost all of the great DC characters for at least a minute or two," and he's seen a lot of those characters make it to the screen. "I go far enough back at DC that really for my whole adult life, if I went to see a DC movie I'd already read it four or five times. Now I'm going to get to see some that I don't know what's going on in, and I'm looking forward to the surprises."

He's not a part of DC editorial anymore, and the DC Entertainment brand came into being after he'd left his staff job, so Levitz suddenly finds himself on the outside looking in. If he feels sad about that, or threatened by the young hot-shots taking over, it doesn't show. "I was just out on a talent summit that DC did [in February] in Burbank, and they had brought in this raft of new young people to do all kinds of projects. The energy that was in the room, the new people who had new ideas was loads of fun. I hope I can keep up with them," he adds with a tone of modesty that even he seems to realise isn't needed.

Levitz is a man who has always moved with the times, and he's enjoying passing on what he's learnt to a new generation, just as his mentors did with him. He teaches subjects such as Publishing and The History of the American Graphic Novel at universities like Columbia and Pace.

He's been part of DC's *New 52* from the beginning, and is soon to launch a

new *Dr Fate* ongoing comic with Sonny Liew as part of DC's move towards more individualistic books, the so-called 'Batgirling of DC'. According to Levitz, he's "having a great deal of fun" with the book, which "definitely has a unique feeling for the DC Universe. We'll see if they turn up one day and say, 'We're having funny hat day, can you have him take off the gold helmet and put on a funny hat?' But I'm hoping they'll continue to let us do it in our own voice, and that it'll attract enough of an audience that we'll get away with it for a few years."

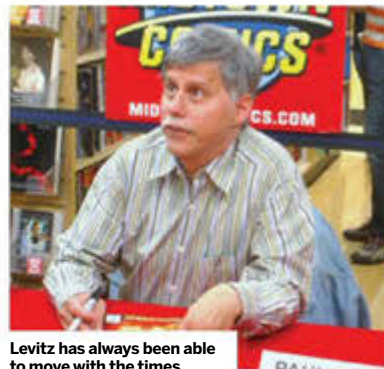
Hearing Levitz, the man who essentially was DC for years, refer to the publisher as 'they' is a strange experience. Perhaps DC would still be where it is now without him, but that seems unlikely.

We ask him what his career highlights have been, and he lets out a long, thoughtful sigh. After listing his accomplishments regarding royalties, he moves on. "Some of the stories I've written. The long run on *Legion* that people still remember, the origin of the *Justice Society* story, that's one of my favourites. The people I got to work with. It's over 40 years. It's so full of just wonderful moments."

He shakes his head and smiles in amazement. Deep inside, he's still the 14-year-old comic fan who can't believe his luck.



He is perhaps best remembered for his writing on *Legion Of Super-Heroes*.



Levitz has always been able to move with the times.



Levitz recalls receiving a letter from a young Alan Moore, pre-*Watchmen*.

Leaving his mark Levitz's comics highlights

Batman

Levitz was the first person to oversee all of the Bat-titles as editor, and was the first to create a bible for the character, and start keeping on top of tone and continuity. He took the job at the height of the DC Implosion in 1978, and ushered Batman into the early Eighties.



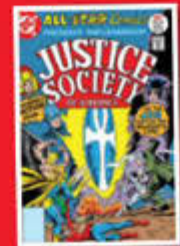
Legion Of Super-Heroes

Levitz wrote *Legion* from 1977-89, with a two-year gap in the middle. During his tenure as writer he produced the seminal *Legion* stories *Earthwar* and, most notably, *The Great Darkness Saga*, which regularly appears on lists of the best comic-book stories. He and regular artist Keith Giffen returned to *Legion* briefly in 2013.



Justice Society

He wrote the *Justice Society* in All Star Comics in the late Seventies. During that time he wrote the origin story of the JSA, and created Helena Wayne, the Earth-2 Huntress. He returned to the character in the *New-52*, as the writer on *World's Finest*, featuring Huntress and Power Girl.



President of DC Comics

During his time as president, Levitz advised Christopher Nolan on *Batman Begins*, DC published *Infinite Crisis* (followed by the love-it-or-hate-it series *52*), Grant Morrison began his long *Batman* run, and the *All-Star* series of stories launched, including *All-Star Superman*.



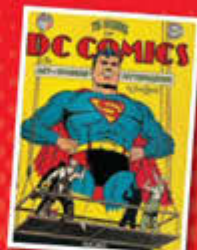
The Comic Book Legal Defence Fund

Levitz serves on the board of this American non-profit organisation, which provides legal advice and representation to people who are being criminally prosecuted because of the comics or graphic novels that they produce. Neil Gaiman, Peter David and Chris Staros are also on its board of directors.



75 Years Of DC Comics

Levitz put his extensive DC knowledge to good use with the massive hardback history of DC Comics, *The Art Of Modern Mythmaking*. Containing numerous panels, cover art, photos, essays and fold-out articles, it's a comprehensive and lovingly put-together guide to one of the US's premier comic publishers.



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HISTORY OF STAR
WARS **108**



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OF THE
STONES**

BEHIND THE
SCENES ON
THIS CREEPY
70S CURIO **122**

RETRO CLASSIC

**THE ROCKY
HORROR
PICTURE SHOW**

**INTERVIEW
UNIVERSAL
SOLDIER**

DOLPH LUNDGREN
TAKES A LOOK BACK **120**

**QUIZ
"I'LL BE
RIGHT HERE"**
HOW MUCH OF ET HAS
STAYED WITH YOU? **126**

**THE MAD STORY OF THE ICONIC
HORROR MUSICAL **116****

**AN IMAGINE
MONTHLY**

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO DARK HORSE STAR WARS

AFTER HELPING TO REVIVE INTEREST IN THE STAR WARS FRANCHISE DURING THE EARLY NINETIES, COMIC-BOOK PUBLISHER DARK HORSE KEPT THE LICENCE FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, EXPLORING THE LENGTH AND DEPTH OF ITS UNIVERSE BEYOND ANYTHING THE MOVIES EVER COULD. GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, WE LOOK BACK AT THE BEST OF DARK HORSE'S STAR WARS

WORDS CHRIS ANDERSON

The *Star Wars* franchise is no stranger to a cull. After all, the movies themselves tell us that it was Darth Vader who wiped out the Jedi, hunting down and killing every last one – something that was depicted in Dark Horse's *Star Wars: Purge* series of comics.

Recently, however, the cleansing that took place had more to do with continuity and the removal of the Expanded Universe from the established canon. This concerns any story elements beyond the core films, with tie-in books, comics and videogames all contributing their own ideas and characters through the years. The Expanded Universe was able to show fans what happened to Luke, Leia and Han after *Return Of The Jedi*, and revealed events taking place between the movies as well as the centuries preceding them. Everything was worked on in partnership with Lucasfilm, who meticulously catalogued the stories, ensuring they complemented the movies and each other, building a world far bigger and richer than any we had experienced on screen.

But the new owner of Lucasfilm, Disney, which bought the company in 2012 for a hefty \$4 billion, has other plans. The biggest is to establish a different version of events away from the first six films, which it will start later this year with the release of a new instalment, *The Force Awakens*, set in the years following *Return Of The Jedi*. When Dark Horse began publishing *Star Wars* comics in 1991, this is also where it chose to start.

Tom Veitch, writer of *Dark Empire*, the miniseries that served as the launch pad, remembers sending a letter to George Lucas. "It was dated November 19, 1988," he reveals. "[Artist] Cam Kennedy and I had just finished a limited series called *The Light And Darkness War* for Epic Comics, an imprint at Marvel, and it had got us thinking about *Star Wars*. I wrote to George Lucas asking him if he would let us do something with his creations, possibly as four 48-page painted productions in the bookshelf format. Marvel had previously had the licence to produce *Star Wars*

"WE WANTED TO BRING BACK DARTH VADER!"

TOM VEITCH

comic-books, but it had faded in the public interest by that point, and even some of the great comic people were saying to us, 'Why do you want to do *Star Wars*? *Star Wars* is dead!' But I sent George examples of our work and asked if he might be interested."

The release of a *Star Wars* role-playing game had also suggested to Veitch that there may still be more to the franchise, and he quickly got a response. "I got a phone call from Lucy Wilson, the head of licensing at Lucasfilm, who wanted to hear our ideas," says Veitch. "That's what George wanted: 'Tell me your ideas, and I'll tell you which ones you can do.' Well, we wanted to

do big things, major stories, not ones that just returned you to the status quo at the end of it. First of all, we wanted to bring back Darth Vader! We thought that the Empire would keep him 'alive' by putting someone else in the suit, so that he could continue to strike fear across the galaxy. Lucy told us, 'You can't do that. But you can bring back the Emperor, if you can figure out how to do it.'"

The initial plan was for the new *Star Wars* material to be published by Epic, overseen at the time by Archie Goodwin, himself very passionate about the franchise, having been a writer on the original Marvel comic and the newspaper strip. Goodwin worked closely with Veitch and Kennedy, and the story of *Dark Empire* took shape. Set six years after *Return Of The Jedi*, it saw Luke Skywalker and his friends hunting down the last remnants of the Empire – made more difficult by the mysterious re-emergence of Emperor Palpatine, who temporarily seduces Luke to the Dark Side, and fan-favourite Boba Fett, who had escaped the depths of the Sarlacc Pit. "We had the idea of cloning the Emperor, and revealing that he had been doing this for a while, inhabiting each new body in succession through the power of the Force," Veitch explains. "And Cam absolutely loved Boba Fett, insisting we brought him into the story, and Lucas approved."

Unfortunately, Goodwin left Epic Comics to work at DC, and the project stalled, with nobody else at Marvel keen to push it through. Veitch eventually floated the idea to Lucasfilm of Dark Horse as a potential



publisher. "I personally told them that Mike Richardson [Dark Horse founder] was a visionary who did a great job with film-related properties," he says. "In no time at all they talked to Mike, and the next thing I know he called me and said he now had the franchise."

According to Randy Stradley, the vice president of publishing at Dark Horse, Richardson had already been speaking to Lucasfilm about acquiring the licence, and with *Dark Empire* needing a publisher everything fell into place. "I think that anybody who was a fan of the movies wanted to see more, and knew that there had to be more, even if additional films were never made," says Stradley. "That more wasn't being done in comics, and in other publishing, seemed crazy."

As *Dark Empire* was being prepared for its release in 1991 as a six-issue miniseries, another project that would help revitalise *Star Wars* was also in the works – *Heir To The Empire*, the novel by Timothy Zahn, again taking place after *Return Of The Jedi*. "When Zahn finished writing his book, Lucy Wilson sent me the manuscript and asked me to make the two works fit together in terms of continuity," remembers Veitch, which is how the Expanded Universe would work going forwards. "It's worth noting that Zahn's novel became an instant bestseller and topped the *New York Times* Bestseller List. That was a signal to everybody – people wanted more *Star Wars*!"



Dark Empire was a big success, prompting Dark Horse to develop more series. Veitch himself went on to write *Dark Empire II* and *Empire's End*, and initiated the idea of different timelines. "I asked Lucasfilm, 'What about doing stories with the ancient Jedi, set 4,000 years before the films?'" he recalls. "They sounded surprised and told me, 'George will never go for this, but we'll ask him.' He liked the idea immediately, and we launched *Tales Of The Jedi* about the Old Republic era."

For Stradley, who was brought on as a writer for the new *Star Wars* titles, it was the publisher's ability to look beyond the core characters of the

The *Purge* series saw the Empire hunting down the last of the Jedi.



films that aided its success. "Series like *Tales Of The Jedi* provided a look at a time readers knew existed – Obi-Wan mentions the Old Republic in *Star Wars: Episode IV* – but it's one that they were unlikely to ever see on screen," he says. "It's like when Mike Richardson and I wrote the *Crimson Empire* miniseries, we focused on some of the coolest background characters in the saga [the Emperor's Crimson Guard]. Everywhere we looked in the *Star Wars* galaxy, it seemed like there were stories to be told. The novels were primarily focused on Luke, Leia and Han, and we could avoid getting tangled in their continuity."

For a time, it seemed that any idea or series could be greenlit, subject to Lucasfilm approval, if it did not contradict what had



Dark Horse oversaw the return of fan-favourite characters like Darth Maul.

gone before. "I'm amazed we got away with the kind of extreme storytelling that we did, and it seems to me we set the benchmark higher in terms of what creators could be permitted to do with movie properties," says Veitch.

The sentiment is echoed by Stradley, who believes the approach should not have been as relaxed. "In some ways, I think the editors at Lucasfilm were too easy-going at first," he argues. "There are things which got approved and carved into the stone tablet of official continuity that make my head hurt. I would have been a much harder taskmaster. But ironically, despite the ease of working with Lucasfilm, we often had a difficult time attracting talent to the books, because many writers and artists had convinced themselves that appeasing the



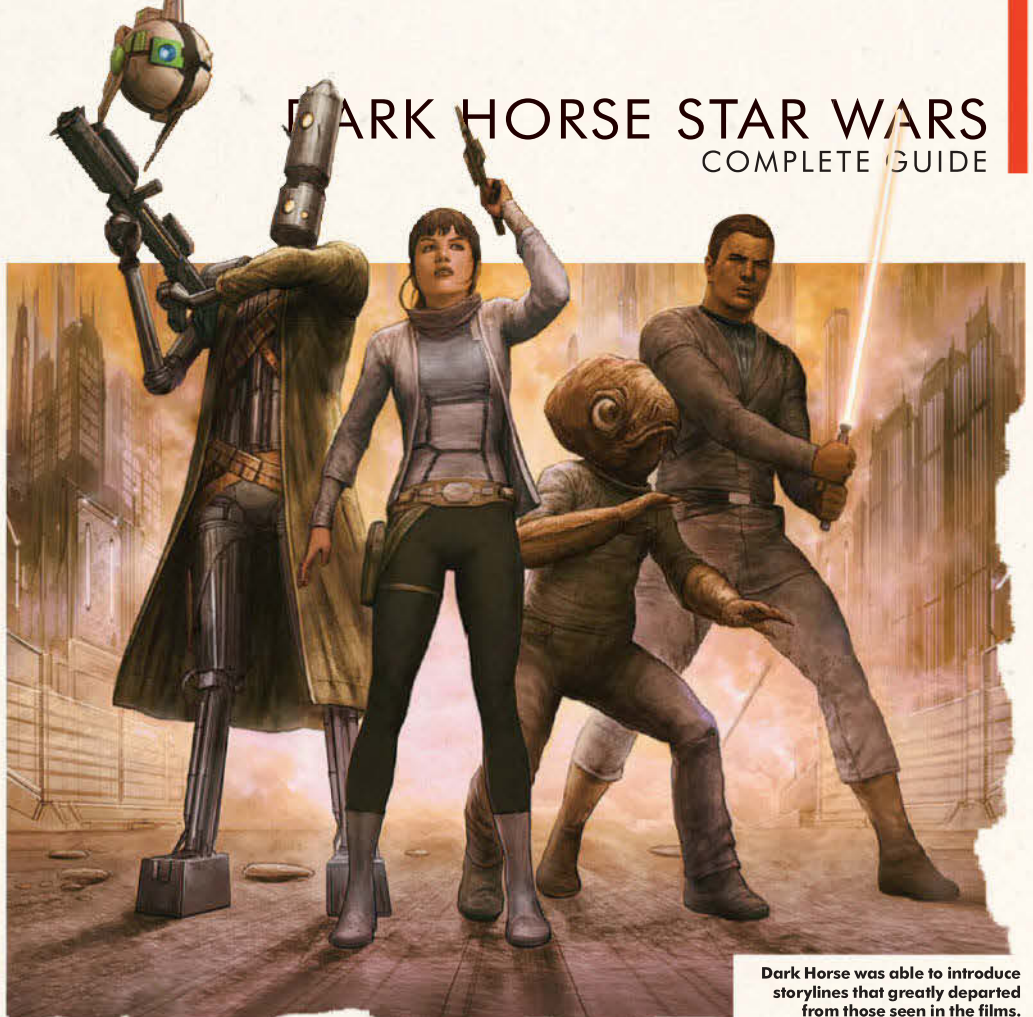
Dark Horse's original plan was to bring back Darth Vader.



Some of the more outlandish storylines saw scenarios like Vader facing off against Maul.



DARK HORSE STAR WARS COMPLETE GUIDE



Dark Horse was able to introduce storylines that greatly departed from those seen in the films.

company would be too tough, and once people make up their minds about something it's difficult to convince them otherwise."

As more new stories began to flesh out the *Star Wars* universe, however, the efforts to make them work together increased. "Beginning with *Dark Empire II*, it became more of a struggle," says Veitch. "We were often getting calls from Lucasfilm, having to argue our vision to them. They even told us to wrap it up at the end of *Dark Empire II*, and it was with great difficulty that *Empire's End* came out at all. But there were so many loose ends left by the first two series, the people in charge finally relented, as long as it could be done in two issues, rather than the usual six."



Another reason that Lucasfilm had started to tighten its grip was because *Star Wars* was returning to cinemas, first with the Special Edition versions of the original trilogy in 1997, and then with an all-new prequel, *Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, in 1999. While providing new worlds, characters and timelines to explore, the prequels were to be a mixed blessing. "To tell the truth, our *Star Wars* sales fell nearly 20 per cent after the release of *The Phantom Menace*," Stradley admits. "This was partially due to the mixed reception the film received, but I believe it was also due to the fact that Lucasfilm over-licensed the franchise, which they later admitted to. Interestingly, our sales finally shot back up a month after the release of *Episode III: Revenge Of The Sith* in 2005. It was as if once the psychic plug of the prequel movies was removed, comic readers returned."

It was during 1999, and the build-up to *The Phantom Menace*, that comics writer Ron Marz – known for his work on *Silver Surfer* and *Green Lantern* – became involved, initially with a title called *Star*



Dark Empire remains one of the imprint's most acclaimed stories.



SOMETHING ELSEWHERE... ELUSIVE...

The 'What If' that never was

While most Dark Horse writers found it easy working with Lucasfilm, someone who may disagree is Peter David. On his website, PeterDavid.net, and elaborated on by *Comic Book Resources*, who asked artist Nick Perks to create a cover for it, David recalls his rejected idea for the *Star Wars: Infinities* series. "The concept was that you take one point in the film, deviate from it and see what happens," he says. "I went to that moment [in *Episode IV: A New Hope*] when the droid that Uncle Owen was originally going to go with blows, and I had it not blow up. So they don't acquire R2-D2, and then the story doesn't go the way it's supposed to... [my version] ended with Leia, now the ruler of the Empire, a Sith Lord, and her apprentice and lover, Luke Skywalker. They didn't know! I was furious when Lucasfilm kicked it back. The cover image to issue #2, with a close shot of Princess Leia in the Darth Maul face make-up glaring out at the reader, would've been killer."

The comics allowed the gap between *Revenge Of The Sith* and *A New Hope* to be bridged.



STORIES FROM FAR, FAR AWAY 10 Dark Horse Star Wars



1. DARK EMPIRE (1991-92)

A clone of the Emperor! The return of Boba Fett! Luke seduced by the Dark Side! This follow-up to *Return Of The Jedi* had it all.



2. CRIMSON EMPIRE (1995)

What happens to the Emperor's Crimson Guard once the Emperor is dead? Quite a lot, with two former guardsmen going head-to-head.



3. X-WING: ROGUE SQUADRON (1995-98)

As the victorious Rebels continue to hunt down the last remains of the Empire, the spotlight falls on Wedge Antilles and his fellow X-Wing pilots.



4. TALES OF THE JEDI (1997-2001)

The first series to explore the days of the Old Republic, it was set around 4,000 years before the movies, with new Jedi and Sith characters.



5. STAR WARS TALES (1999-2005)

Standalone stories focusing on different characters. Find issue #9 if you can to see Darth Vader fight a resurrected Darth Maul.

➔ *Wars Tales*, and then with the *Star Wars: Darth Maul* miniseries. "We worked fairly closely with Lucasfilm on anything Maul related, as not a whole lot had been revealed about him, so the parameters weren't as obvious as for Vader, Luke or Han," he says. "That particular miniseries also had to tie in with a novel, *Shadow Hunter* by Michael Reaves, coming out at the same time as the movie, so I remember being on a phone call with Lucasfilm, Dark Horse and Reaves, just hashing out what his back story was going to be and who would tell which pieces of it. One of the coolest things for us in the comics is we got to reveal how Maul looks with his shirt off, so you get to see how the tattoos on his face continue all over his body."

Marz remembers a similar collaboration process when writing a Jango Fett story to tie in with *Episode II: Attack of The Clones* in 2002. "I was given bits and pieces of the script before the

film came out so that I had some sense of what Jango was up to," he says. "But honestly, I had no idea that he is killed at the end. So I wrote this big Jango story, really got into the character, then I went to see the movie and he got his head cut off! They literally gave me the earlier scenes from the opening of the movie. I had no idea that I was basically writing a dead man."

Despite the occasional surprises, Marz is another talent who relates to the ease of working with Lucasfilm, likening the *Star Wars* universe to that of Marvel and DC, with its own set of rules, history and characters. It was something he experienced further with the new titles launched by Stradley, who took over as *Star Wars* lead editor in 2001. "I reorganised the line into two ongoing titles: *Republic*, set during the prequel trilogy, and *Empire*, set between *Episodes IV* and *V*," Stradley

explains. "After letting those run their course for several years, we launched some new books: *Knights Of The Old Republic*, set 4,000 years before the films; *Dark Times*, taking place right after *Revenge Of The Sith*; *Rebellion*, set during the original trilogy; and *Legacy*, based around 100 years after *Return Of The Jedi*. In *Dark Times*, artist Doug Wheatley and I were actually following characters we had introduced in *Republic* at a time when the Empire had just taken over."

Through other miniseries and adaptations of certain novels, Dark Horse discovered many interesting ways of working with the franchise. *Star Wars: Infinities*, for example, took a 'what if' approach to the films, exploring different outcomes to their events. In 2013,

George Lucas even agreed to let Dark Horse adapt the first rough-draft screenplay of his original film, called *The Star Wars*, with a very different take on the idea that made it to cinemas.

"WE GOT TO REVEAL HOW MAUL LOOKS WITH HIS SHIRT OFF"

RON MARZ

Exploring new concepts and characters is exciting, but for Marz nothing could beat working with those from the movies, although he admits it became difficult over time. "I was writing the *Empire* comic-book for a year or so, and that was great because I really wanted to tell stories about Luke, Leia, Han and Vader," he says. "But so much of that time period had been explored already in other Expanded Universe stuff, I ended up kind of doing the stories that took place in the cracks between other stories. It wasn't ideal, but we wanted to stick to the canon."

With its many titles, Dark Horse contributed much to the *Star Wars* universe, from helping to define Darth Maul's origins to, as Veitch recalls, creating devices like the Jedi holocron, which almost appeared in *Attack Of The Clones* (and recently did in animated series ➔

Alternative scenarios were played out in the *Infinities* series.



titles that are definitely worth a look



6. INFINITIES (2002-04)

What if Luke failed to destroy the Death Star? What if he died on Hoth? Alternative movie storylines are explored in this series.



7. PURGE (2005)

In a title set shortly after *Revenge Of The Sith*, Vader is depicted in all of his ruthless glory as he hunts the remaining Jedi.



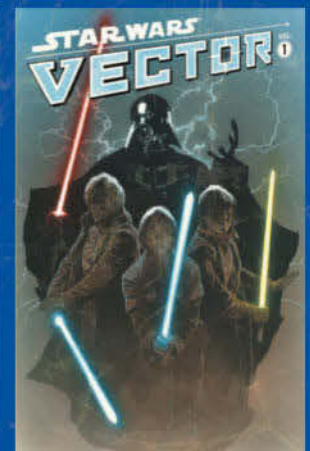
8. KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC (2006-10)

In a time long before the prequels, a trainee Jedi is on the run after being framed for the murder of his mentor.



9. LEGACY (2006-10)

A century after *Return Of The Jedi*, a new Sith Lord has emerged. Can Luke's descendant Cade, who would rather be a smuggler, stop him?



10. VECTOR (2008)

Back when Dark Horse had four ongoing *Star Wars* titles, *Vector* was a 12-issue crossover that cleverly linked them together.



"I SAID, 'EVERYBODY CRIES
WHEN OLD YELLER DIES.
KILL THE FAMILY DOG –
KILL CHEWIE'"

RANDY STRADLEY

➤ *Star Wars: Rebels*). “*Crimson Empire* was also the first time we showed that clones were in the service of the Empire, long before the prequels did,” adds Stradley.

Of course, there is one rather controversial event that Dark Horse gave the Expanded Universe, which Stradley takes responsibility for – the death of Chewbacca. “Publishers Del Rey had acquired the rights to the novels, and they wanted a big event to set the tone for their direction – something that would show this wasn’t business as usual for *Star Wars*,” he says. “Lucasfilm brought a few editors and authors from Del Rey together with some of us from Dark Horse to discuss ideas. Del Rey asked if they were allowed to kill Luke Skywalker, and were told no. But they were determined to kill someone, and thought Han, Leia or even Lando wouldn’t have the impact they were after. Feeling that everyone was missing the obvious, I said, ‘Everybody cries when Old Yeller dies. Kill the family dog – kill Chewie.’ And that’s what they did.”



It had been an eventful two decades for Dark Horse, but the sale of Lucasfilm to Disney was to have repercussions. In 2009, Disney had bought Marvel, the previous holders of the *Star Wars* licence, and it made sense to take it back as soon as it was up for renewal – increasingly so with the new direction that was planned. As Lucasfilm owns any material featuring its characters, all of Dark Horse’s titles went with it, giving Marvel the option to reprint them as it sees fit.

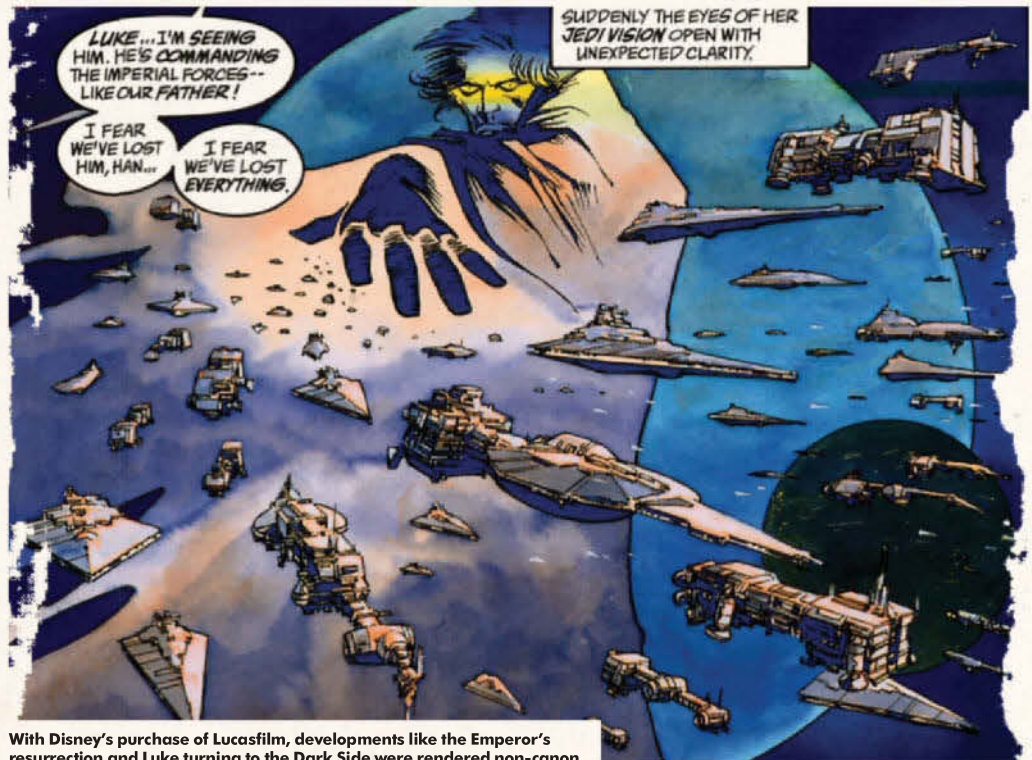
Stradley understands the thinking behind the move, but disagrees with the Expanded Universe no longer being canon. “I feel bad for the fans who invested so much of their time, money and emotions,” he says. “We had expanded the universe for George’s Lucasfilm, but now Disney’s Lucasfilm has thrown our efforts in the trash. The old fans are being told they can get on board with the new direction or fall by the wayside.”

Veitch agrees. “They actually own many years’ worth of ideas, characters, planets and creatures, and they are saying, ‘Oh well, let’s start again from scratch,’” he adds. “Silly business people, if you ask me. It’s like sending a gold mine into a black hole. They could easily have started a project to flesh out the *Star Wars* universe using that valuable material.”

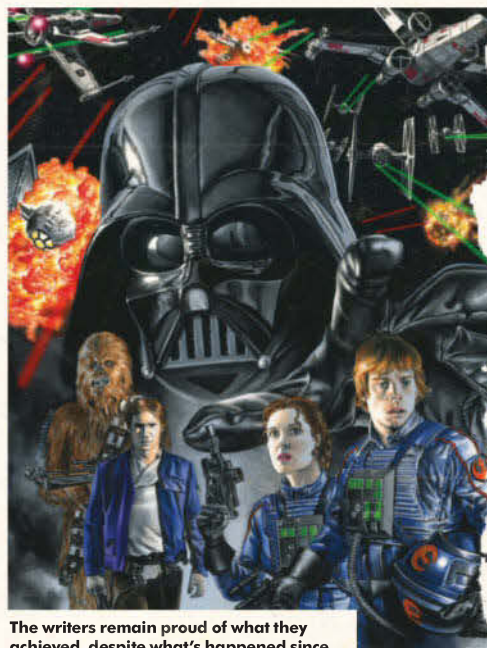
In a statement, Lucasfilm explained that its future plans with Disney, and its position regarding the Expanded Universe, were intended “to give maximum freedom to the filmmakers and also preserve an element of surprise.” It has since announced that certain elements and characters may still apply, while Marvel has re-released some of the Dark Horse books.

For Stradley and the rest of his team, however, it leaves raw and mixed emotions, looking back on what once was a cooperative and highly productive relationship with filmmakers Lucasfilm that suddenly became no more. But with so many highly regarded stories and an approach to the franchise that has yet to be rivalled in terms of scope and imagination, it is fitting for Stradley to have the last word. “I think we did *Star Wars* right,” he says. ✨

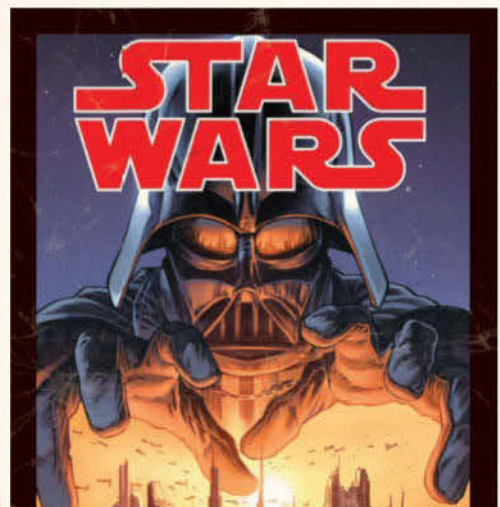
Dark Horse’s *Star Wars* comic-books can be downloaded from Comixology now.



With Disney’s purchase of Lucasfilm, developments like the Emperor’s resurrection and Luke turning to the Dark Side were rendered non-canon.



The writers remain proud of what they achieved, despite what’s happened since.



UNCERTAIN, THE FUTURE IS

What’s next for Dark Horse’s *Star Wars*?

While the *Star Wars* licence is back with Marvel, the old Dark Horse material will not be going away. Any comic or novel related to the Expanded Universe has been rebranded as ‘*Star Wars Legends*’ to signal that it is outside of what is now the established continuity – so that readers can understand why the events of *Dark Empire* contradict those in *The Force Awakens*, for example. Marvel has already added most of Dark Horse’s back catalogue to its Marvel Unlimited digital subscription service, with collections being released as trade paperbacks. The first, *Star Wars Legends Epic Collection: The Empire Volume 1*, features stories set just after *Revenge Of The Sith*, including issues of *Republic*, *Dark Times* and *Purge*.

RICHARD O'BRIEN'S THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW IS JUST AS HUGE, RANDY AND PHENOMENAL 40 YEARS AFTER ITS THEATRICAL RELEASE. WE LOOK AT HOW FANS OF THE SWEET TRANSVESTITE FROM TRANSSEXUAL, TRANSYLVANIA, HAVE BEEN KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF THE RETRO ICON ALIVE...

WORDS POPPY-JAY PALMER

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW



Film

RUNNING TIME:

100 minutes

RELEASE DATE:

15 August 1975

DIRECTOR:

Jim Sharman

WRITERS:

Richard O'Brien, Jim Sharman

CAST:

Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon, Barry Bostwick, Richard O'Brien, Patricia Quinn, Nell Campbell, Jonathan Adams, Meat Loaf

About

When Brad and Janet's car breaks down, they go looking for a telephone. Instead, they are swept into a celebration with eccentric Transylvanians. Things really get shaken up once they meet an all-singing, all-dancing transvestite scientist named Dr Frank N Furter, who just made a breakthrough with his latest project.

Of all the iconic lips in history, the Science Fiction/Double Feature lips in the opening credits of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* are definitely in the top five at least. Those lips symbolise everything that is right with the world of musical comedy-horror, queer-centric B-movies. Those lips kick started one of the world's biggest cult classics and the longest theatrical run cinema has ever seen.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show's origins are usually associated more with musical theatre than sci-fi, being the campy, sex-fuelled romp that it is – and of course, the fact that it actually started life as a stage production. But writer, lyricist and *Rocky Horror* mastermind Richard O'Brien first wrote it as a tribute to the genre B-movies of the late Forties to the early Seventies. The first song alone references classics like *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, *Flash Gordon*, *King Kong*, *It Came From Out Of Space* and *The Day Of The Triffids*. O'Brien wanted his show to combine the shoddy dialogue of schlock horror and unintentional hilarity

of B-horror movies with Fifties rock 'n' roll and Steve Reeves muscle flicks.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show was responsible for bringing to life some of the most colourful characters in the genre. First you have Brad (Barry Bostwick) and Janet (Susan Sarandon), the drab young couple who get caught up in a whirl of cross-dressing and glitter inside an old castle while out trying to capture the American Dream. Then there are the residents of the old castle, including Riff Raff (O'Brien), the gaunt and hunchbacked handyman and his sister-cum-lover Magenta (Patricia Quinn), the sly maid with big hair and a short skirt; Columbia (Nell Campbell), the sequined groupie in a top hat who is

always either screaming or tap dancing; Rocky (Peter Hinwood), an immaculate creation in golden hot pants, and Dr Frank N Furter (Tim Curry), the star of the show and one of the most lascivious characters ever written. Curry's

"HE REEKS OF SEX AND ROCK AND ROLL"

performance as the transvestite from Transsexual, Transylvania is captivating, overtly raunchy and positively dripping in pheromones. Everything about him, from his platform heels and fishnet stockings to his eye shadow and loose perm, absolutely reeks of sex and rock 'n' roll.

If you're a full-on *Rocky Horror Picture Show* fan, you'll know this; they know everything already. But if you're not, you will want to be. Since its release, *Rocky Horror* fanatics have transformed the film into a sleeper hit. When it first opened in the summer of 1975, nobody saw it. Meat Loaf and director Jim Sharman have since said they went to a screening together in the Midwest during the film's opening week, and found the movie theatre to be completely empty except for them. It wasn't until it played at the Waverly Theatre in New York a year later that



THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

RETRO CLASSIC

CLASSIC QUOTES

**"A MENTAL MIND FUCK
CAN BE NICE"**

FRANK

"CRAWLING ON THE PLANET'S FACE,
SOME INSECTS CALLED THE HUMAN
RACE LOST IN TIME, AND LOST IN
SPACE... AND MEANING"

THE CRIMINOLOGIST

"THEY'RE FOREIGNERS WITH
WAYS DIFFERENT FROM OUR
OWN. THEY MIGHT DO SOME
MORE... FOLK DANCING"

BRAD

**"I'M COLD AND I'M WET
AND I'M JUST PLAIN
SCARED!"**

JANET

"YOU GOT CAUGHT WITH A FLAT.
WELL, HOW 'BOUT THAT?"

FRANK

"YOU ARE VERY LUCKY TO
BE INVITED UP TO FRANK'S
LABORATORY. SOME PEOPLE WOULD
GIVE THEIR RIGHT ARM FOR THE
PRIVILEGE"

COLUMBIA

**"I SEE YOU SHIVER
WITH
ANTICI... PATION."**

FRANK

"THAT'S NO WAY TO BEHAVE
ON YOUR FIRST DAY OUT. BUT,
UHM, SINCE YOU'RE SUCH AN
EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY, I'M PREPARED
TO FORGIVE YOU"

FRANK

"I DON'T LIKE MEN WITH TOO MANY
MUSCLES"

JANET

**"MY VHEELS! MY GOD,
I CAN'T MOVE MY
VHEELS!"**

DR SCOTT

"DON'T DREAM IT, BE IT"
FRANK

RETRO CLASSIC

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

It started to get any kind of fan recognition at all. A string of midnight screenings at the Waverly started a phenomenon. Night after night, the same people kept returning, bringing along more people, who also came back for round two. The midnight showings became so popular that word of mouth spread and sparked one of the biggest, strongest cult followings for a single movie of all time.

With the midnight screenings came audience participation, a tradition that still happens today. Fans dress up as their favourite characters in fishnets, hot pants, top hats and sequins with more gusto than a Transylvanian at a dance party, and take part in costume competitions. The film's costume designer Sue Blane, who also did the costumes for *Rocky Horror's* stage production, has admitted that when she found out that fans were dressing up for the film she thought it would be kind of tacky, but after seeing the time, effort and dedicated campiness that went into their recreations, she was amazed and completely on board with it.



Rocky Horror fans that rock up in tailcoats and corsets have also been known to bring their own props to act out scenes. Some venues even provide props on arrival, and by 'props' we're talking literally anything that appears in the film.

Basic prop kits include: dry rice, to throw in celebration at Ralph and Betty's wedding at the start; newspapers, to cover your head from the rain like Janet does on her way through the storm; water pistols, to create the rain that you are covering your head from; flashlights, to wave during the 'There's a light' verse of *Over At The Frankenstein Place*; rubber gloves, to pull on and snap in sync with Frank N Furter (when snapped it unison it creates the most fantastic noise); noisemakers like party horns and football rattles, to shake, blow and applause along with the Transylvanians at the end of the creation speech (when shaken, blown and rattled in

unison it creates the worst noise); confetti, to throw at the end of the *Charles Atlas Song* when Rocky and Frank head towards the bedroom; toilet paper, to throw into the air when Dr Scott enters the lab and Brad shouts "Great Scott!"; toast, to throw at the screen when Frank proposes a toast; party hats, to wear at the dinner party; bells, to jingle when Frank sings "Did you hear a bell ring?" during *Planet Schmanet Janet*; and playing cards, for when Frank sings "Cards for sorrow, cards for pain" during the *I'm Going Home* sequence.

There are also a couple of things movie-goers are absolutely not allowed to take with them. Fans have been known to bring hot dogs and prunes to throw at their appropriate mentions in the film, but ketchup and prune juice attract rodents and leave stains on the screens. Buttered toast is also widely frowned upon – just think of the mess – and candles for 'There's a light' are banned in most cinemas. A lot of places allow flashlights as a substitute, however, which is admittedly less fun but probably for the best. Open flames, prop newspapers and excitable fans really aren't a great combination. Some of the more prissy cinemas put blanket bans on most props. The amount of general throwing involved, and the enthusiasm behind it, has led to a lot injuries and broken screens in the past. If you want the full *Rocky Horror* prop experience, you need to do your research and look for screenings with loose morals and looser guidelines.

Audience participation doesn't stop at props and costumes. At some screenings,



One scene involves a memorable cameo from Meat Loaf.



Much of the cast was retained from the successful Broadway show.

"FANS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO BRING HOT DOGS AND PRUNES"



THE 5 BEST SCI-FI SONG AND DANCE NUMBERS

COME AND GET YOUR LOVE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY (2014)



1 Star-Lord grooving to Redbone on his tape player set the tone for a wild ride of spaceships, aliens and Eighties musical hits. Everything about the *Awesome Mix #1* is brilliant.

JOHNNY B GOODE BACK TO THE FUTURE (1985)



2 Marty McFly took to the stage, raged against the machine and perplexed all of the innocent prom-goers with a confusing but intense Chuck Berry guitar solo. Hell yes, Marty B Goode.

GET DOWN SATURDAY NIGHT EX MACHINA (2015)



3 Scientist Nathan Cheatham boogieing to Oliver Cheatham's *Get Down Saturday Night* with his chest out and Kyoko by his side is equally eerie and hilarious in equal measures.

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

RETRO CLASSIC



The film is packed with references to classic horror.



Brad and Jane make for the perfect fish-out-of-water couple.

Rocky Horror remains evocative and popular to this day.



WATCH FIRST



HERCULES (1958)

Steve Reeve's rippling muscles and loincloth clearly inspired Rocky, the exceptional beauty.

WATCH NEXT



DR HORRIBLE'S SING-ALONG BLOG (2008)

Joss Whedon's short but sweet musical follows the joys and woes of an evil scientist gone wrong.

a live cast of fans actually acts out the entire film under the screen. Callbacks – or ad-lib responses – are also a regular thing. According to Hoberman and Rosenbaum's book *Midnight Movies*, the call-back craze started in 1976 at a Labour Day weekend screening. Audience member Louis Farese Jr, usually a pretty shy guy, found himself bored and noticed that the cast left quite a bit of time between each line. When Janet put a newspaper over her head to protect herself from the rain, Farese Jr yelled out: "Buy an umbrella, you cheap bitch!" Fans have been shouting out sarcastic comments to the screen ever since. You need to fine-tune and polish your technique, however, before giving it a try. Where funny call-backers are applauded, annoying ones are booed and stripped of their dignity.

It's very easy to get excited about *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. As well as having a brilliant cast of quirky characters, catchy song and dance numbers and unparalleled sex appeal, it's also responsible for introducing a great number of musical fans to sci-fi and horror and sci-fi and horror fans to musicals. Combined, the two fan groups create a force stronger than an army of Charles Atlases. You'll never feel more love in a cinema than when you're sat in the front row at a *Rocky Horror* screening. It's all terribly contagious, glitter, corsets, ray guns and all. Let's do the time warp again!

The Rocky Horror Picture Show is out now on Blu-ray and DVD.



YOUR TAKE ON THE CLASSIC

WHAT YOU THOUGHT @SCIFINOW



"Undoubtedly one of the greatest musicals of all time!"
@quidditysea



"It's amazing. Me and my friends have singalongs over Skype!" @JuniperJennie



"I'm always surprised at how many people haven't seen it, but I do get to make them watch it. It never fails to make me smile."



@Cascararogue

"No matter what your preference, Tim Curry's Frank N Furter is the sexiest performance in film history. 'Come up to the lab...'"
@TimmisTrevor



"The original is wonderful. I have yet to see a reimagining that was worth the time spent watching it. Now feeling sad at the thought."



@GreenOakSteve

"I love it, the husband loves it and now my 8-year-old sings along... fortunately she doesn't get the jokes!"
@TheCrowLady



"Love, love, love it! I can't imagine how a remake could work..." @parodyofvirtue



"One of my all-time favourites! Nothing like a bit of Time Warp in the afternoon."



@Freak_like_me85

"I'll always give myself over to absolute pleasure."



@HannahChapter1

"Love! I still watch it, and the reboot idea is stressing me out!" @QoftU



"Love it. Seen it countless times. Can quote it from start to finish. Brilliant, brilliant film/show."



@Y2Neildotcom

"The Rocky Horror Picture Show is a classic. What else is there to say?"
@jonathancyfer

JUMP IN THE LINE (SHAKE SENORA) BEETLEJUICE (1988)



4 The completely random but completely entertaining sing-along at the end of *Beetlejuice* never fails to make us smile. We want to dance-levitate with Lydia every time!

PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN (1974)



5 Sing along with us now: "If you're blue and you don't know where to go to, why don't you go where fashion sits? 'UUUUTTIN AAAAHHHHN THAAAA' 'IIIIITZZZZZZ!'"



INTERVIEW

DOLPH LUNDGREN

HE HAS PLAYED EVERYTHING, FROM AN IMPOSING ROCKY ADVERSARY TO THE ULTIMATE ACTION HERO. WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING AND A PHYSIQUE THAT PUTS MOST MEN TO SHAME, DOLPH LUNDGREN IS AN INTIMIDATING PROSPECT. THE ACTION STAR TALKS ABOUT HIS WRESTLE WITH FAME...

WORDS OLIVER PFEIFFER

Six-foot-five former Swedish model Dolph Lundgren went from a blink-and-you'll-miss-it Bond henchman to colossal Soviet killing machine in *Rocky IV*, before landing his first lead as He-Man in *Masters Of The Universe*. Five years later, he was going toe-to-toe with Jean-Claude Van Damme in *Universal Soldier*, but the misjudged Keanu Reeves sci-fi *Johnny Mnemonic* derailed his cinematic career in the mid-Nineties. 15 years later, Sylvester Stallone offered a helping hand with a part in fallen action hero ensemble *The Expendables*. We spoke to the actor about his heyday and how he's happy easing into smaller parts.

Let's start with playing He-Man in *Masters Of The Universe*, your first lead role...

It was one of the first movies where I thought, "Oh I'm gonna play a toy! This is gonna end my career!" Now, it's like you've made it if you play a toy and go on to make a zillion dollars, but back then it wasn't like that. I went to a *Masters Of The Universe* convention back then in New York, and it was just me on stage and 5,000 four-year olds with swords shouting, "He Man!" and I was thinking "This is it man - it's over!" But it was a good experience... it was one of the few movies that I've done that was a real kids picture that you can show to anyone, as there's not too much blood in it.

You were just 28 at the time. Did you feel an enormous amount of weight on your shoulders?

It was a big challenge. I had to go from being a Soviet killer [as Drago in *Rocky IV*] to an all-American hero in like six months! Also, I went through a lot of shit in my life at the time, and I kind of became famous overnight with the *Rocky* movie. I had problems with management, people ripping me off... I was just a Swedish kid who happened to be in a *Rocky* movie.

What was it like working with Frank Langella as Skeletor?

It was interesting, as he was in make-up that was very fixed and appeared to be restricting, yet he was able

to transform superbly, and he had it worked out pretty well. I don't know what he thought about me... I was struggling and it was hard for me, but Langella was good; that helped to support me.

Were you happy with the finished film?

It has really stood the test of time, and people love me in it. The movie did okay, even though Cannon Films kind of went bankrupt right after, so it was put on the back-burner. As a result, it probably wasn't finished as well as it could have been. But I like it.

What are your thoughts on the prospect of bringing back He-Man, and would you be interested in getting involved?

I met a writer actually who was working on a sequel. For a while it was John Woo who was directing, then it was another Chinese director [John M Chu], and for a while they said Channing Tatum was to star... but sure, if they want to put me in it... we'll see.

Well, they're remaking everything else...

Yeah, they're doing everything else, every other frickin' movie they can find and just milking everything. But I think what the world needs is another *Rocky* movie.

How about an older incarnation of He-Man?

Well, perhaps they could do the prequel... go back to the Forties or I could play a senior - there you go!

***Universal Soldier* fared far better financially, and you've played Andrew Scott three times now. Are you proud of that franchise?**

I like the first one the best, because it was a bigger role and it was also an interesting script. I think that franchise is interesting - it's also something that I bet is going to be revamped again, if not now then ten years from now, because anything now that has a brand name to it you don't have to spend that extra number of million dollars to hammer it into people's heads.

***Universal Soldier: Day Of Reckoning* was a bit of a detour, wasn't it? It pushed the envelope**

with its strong subjective approach and serious tone that also favoured realism over CGI...

Yeah, John Hyams did a different take on it. I think he's a talented director - I think there was a lot of fighting about the script, but I feel that he did a really good job. Some of the fight sequences, particularly the hand-to-hand combat sequences, were superb.

You have significantly reduced parts in these sequels. Is this something you're happy with?

I think that there's nothing wrong with playing a smaller role if it's an interesting role. Actually, I've started to have a bit of a foray in doing smaller roles and not taking on the whole project. I've done a few of those lately just for the acting experience. I'd rather do a smaller interesting role and maybe have a lot more fun with it.

Lundgren has fond memories of his role in *Universal Soldier*.

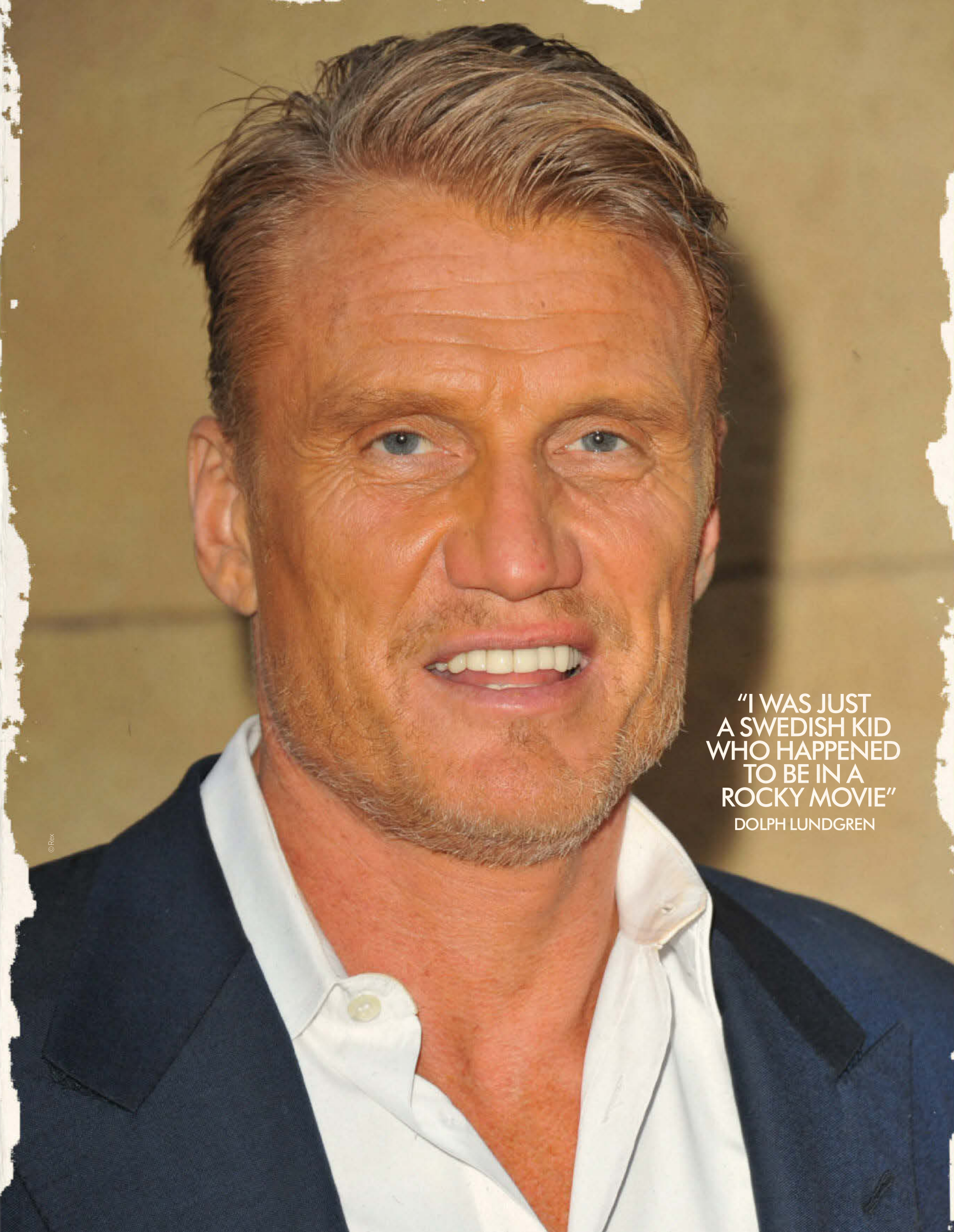


You've also directed a few features now. Why does this attract you, and will you continue?

It was just a natural progression. A director I worked with got sick on a picture, and I took over and enjoyed it, learning a lot about the filmmaking process. When you direct something and star in it you might as well just produce it, because otherwise somebody else will just take it away from you at some point. Then *The Expendables* came along... ☞



Universal Soldier: Day Of Reckoning is available to buy on DVD now.



"I WAS JUST
A SWEDISH KID
WHO HAPPENED
TO BE IN A
ROCKY MOVIE"
DOLPH LUNDGREN

FLASHBACK

CHILDREN OF THE STONES

THE SEVENTIES WERE A GOLDEN AGE OF KIDS FANTASY TV, AND NO BRITISH SERIAL CHILLED OUR SOULS LIKE CHILDREN OF THE STONES. 38 YEARS ON FROM ITS ERA-DEFINING BROADCAST, WE LOOK BACK AT THE SERIES THAT SPOOKED A GENERATION...

WORDS STEVE O'BRIEN

Remember when the British countryside was a place where horror hid in plain view? Since the Seventies, it's lost much of that mystery. What do the people of 2015 think of when they picture rural Britain? Matt Baker? The Countryside Alliance? Cow poop? Alex James and his cheese empire? Back in the Seventies, rural Britain was a place of dark superstitions, peopled by folk who looked at us through alien eyes. It was forbidding and strange, and seemed stuck in a cultural time warp.

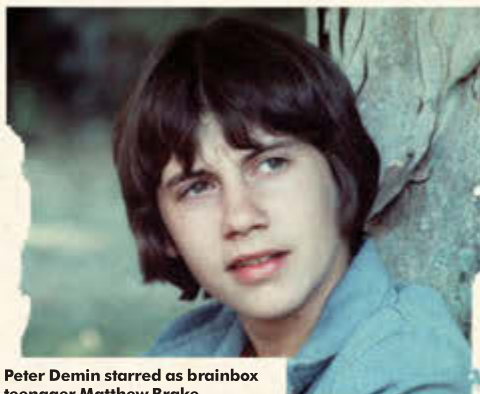
What with the explosion of folk-horror cinema in the Seventies, it's a wonder why anybody voluntarily travelled outside of urban Britain. *The Wicker Man* warned us that the pagan ways were alive and well on the island of Summerisle, while *The Blood On Satan's Claw* and *The Witchfinder General* found their devilish inspiration in the mud and grass of rural England. The most disturbing horror in British cinema in the Seventies wasn't in industrial, built-up Britain, but in the green and brown patches in between.

In the real world, a pair of actor-cum-writers were about to less loose their own small screen entry in the folk-horror canon; a full-blooded children's drama that would become one of the insidiously influential shows of the Seventies, a series that is recalled with a sharp shiver by those who witnessed it in its innocuous afternoon ITV slot – *Children Of The Stones*.

It seems hard to believe now that one of the most blazingly original series of the decade came not only from ITV, but from its children's arm. These days, original kids telly is all but dead on the third channel, while the BBC seems to have virtually given up on self-

produced dramas for the under 16s. The Seventies now looks like a precious golden age of children's drama, where both BBC1 and ITV produced series that were bold and rarely spoke down to their audience. It's hard to imagine a series that demands of its young viewers a working knowledge of pagan ritual and astrophysics. If *Horrible Histories* is the GCSE, *Children Of The Stones* is the BSci.

Jeremy Burnham had been a jobbing actor who'd stumbled into writing after guesting in an episode of pop-art spy series *The Avengers*. He went on to pen five episodes of the show's final run in 1968-69 before he pitched a script for the BBC series *Paul Temple*, which was being script-edited by another on/off actor, Trevor Ray. Near-neighbours in north London, they soon struck up a deep friendship and decided to try writing together. "From then on we tried various ideas on the fools that ruled," Ray says.



Peter Dinklage starred as brainbox teenager Matthew Brake.

"Neither of us can remember where the idea of *Children Of The Stones* came from," Burnham tells SciFiNow. "It was just serendipity."

Burnham and Ray's story focused on a father and son who travel to the Wiltshire village of Milbury. Adam Brake is a recently widowed astrophysicist, a tweed-jacketed rationalist who has come to the apparently sleepy village to study magnetic fields around the neolithic stones that pepper the area. But why are so many of the townsfolk so keen for the Brakes to stay, and why do they all go around chirping, "Happy day!" at one another? They soon discover, with the help of the village's curator and her daughter, that the quiet hamlet has a dark secret, connecting the stones to a black hole in space, the power of which is used by the town elder Hendrick, to control the villagers.

"'Happy day' isn't a phrase that isn't used [in real-life]," Burnham says. "Nobody says 'Happy day' to each other. That's what makes it a bit eerie, and that's what we wanted; that this place isn't normal."

That sense of unease, and of an oppressive threat, pervades *Children Of The Stones*. There are narrative cribs from *The Midwich Cuckoos* and *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*, but the story *Children Of The Stones* tells is thoroughly unique, weaving hard science into a story about ancient traditions, occult rituals and the cyclical influence of the past on the present.

"We did quite a lot of research into ley lines, supernovas, etc.," Burnham tells us. "We found an astrophysicist expert for the series. He was the father

A man with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark grey suit, a light yellow shirt, and a dark blue tie with red and yellow diagonal stripes. He is holding a large roll of film in his left hand. The background is a textured blue wall.

DREN OF THE STONES

FLASHBACK

"NOBODY SAYS
'HAPPY DAY' TO
EACH OTHER.
THAT'S WHAT MAKES
IT A BIT EERIE"

JEREMY BURNHAM



"I CONTINUE TO GET LETTERS SAYING, 'THANKS FOR RUINING MY CHILDHOOD!'"

JEREMY BURNHAM

of a boy our son went to school with." That expert – Dr Peter Williams – came on board to ensure the scientific details were watertight. But the story's ancient, pagan themes were a natural fit for HTV, the ITV company whose reach took in Stonehenge, Silbury Hill and Avebury, where the series was eventually filmed.



"Because of the standing stones, we knew it had to take place in Avebury, so the obvious market for it was HTV," says Burnham. "When we went down there to do some research, and the first thing we saw was a crow standing on a sheep's head, both immobile. So it seemed like the right place for our story."

Avebury is a small village in Wiltshire that is built around a Neolithic stone circle. While the interiors were filmed, somewhat obviously, in the studios of HTV in Bristol, Avebury stands in for the exteriors, and director Peter Graham Scott gives the place a cinematic sense of menace and foreboding. From the show's ominous opening titles, where the stones are filmed, using a handheld camera with a fisheye lens, against the wailing groans of Sidney Sagar's atonal avant-garde musical score, it's clear that this is a series that wants to get under your skin and into your soul.

"I thought Peter Graham Scott did a great job," says Burnham. "At first, I thought the 'music' was way over the top, but I later changed my mind."

31-year-old Gareth Thomas, still a year away from his signature role as curly topped terrorist Roj Blake in *Blake's 7*, was cast as the atheistic Dr Adam Brake, with Peter Denim (from the Curly Wurly adverts) as his precociously gifted son, Matthew.

For the show's Big Bad, the sinister lord of the manor Hendrick, Burnham and Ray cherry-picked Iain Cuthbertson, then most famous as Adam Faith's conniving Glaswegian crony Charlie in *Budgie*, while Burnham's wife, Veronica Strong, won the role of museum curator Margaret, a village newcomer who has yet to be sucked in by the 'Happy Days'. Finally, the ever-great Freddie Jones, now better known as Toby Jones' dad, was signed to play Dai, the poacher.



Matthew and some of the village's "happy people".

The painting that drew Matthew and his father to the village. The prop is the holy grail to Stones fans.



Children Of The Stones was only ever shown twice (it was repeated a year after its initial transmission), but its influence looms large. It was one of a small group of children's shows to be given a pre-BBFC video release, and it was deemed worthy of a Radio 4 special, fronted by comedian Stewart Lee, in 2012.

"The proof that it still stands up today is that I continue to get letters from all over the world saying things like 'Thanks for ruining my childhood!', which I take as a compliment," Burnham tells us. "We have recently had two offers to remake it and follow it with the sequel, but we are currently in dispute with ITV about the rights."

That sequel is a Burnham-penned literary follow-up, published by Fantom Films, where a now grown-up Matthew returns to Milbury, this time with his own son, Tom, and his now elderly father Adam in tow.

"Trevor and I had discussed the possibility of a sequel, but we hadn't got very far with it when we had an amicable disagreement about how it should go," says Burnham. "So Trevor relinquished all his rights in the story and characters to me. He gave the result his enthusiastic approval."

There are nods to *Children Of The Stones* in Simon Pegg's West Country-sourced *Hot Fuzz*, while Russell T Davies has spoken warmly of the series' influence on his early CBBC serials, *Century Falls* and *Dark Season*. And as Burnham recalls, the fans of *Children Of The Stones* come from the most unexpected places.

"When Veronica was acting in Alan Bennett's *Habeas Corpus* in Israel, the British Ambassador came round after a performance," he says. "He'd read in the programme that she was married to me, and his kids

CHILDREN OF THE STONES

FLASHBACK



The quite-brilliant Iain Cuthbertson as the village's leader, Hendrick.



Gareth Thomas (right) appeared in *Children Of The Stones* a year before he was cast as Roj Blake in *Blake's 7*.



Freddie (Toby's dad) Jones as Dai the poacher.



Comedian Stewart Lee described *Children Of The Stones* as "the scariest programme ever made for children".



Veronica Strong, who played museum curator Margaret Smythe, was and is married to co-writer Jeremy Burnham.

HTV'S BEST OF THE WEST

JUST A FEW OF THE GREAT DRAMAS THAT AIRED IN THE SEVENTIES

1 SKY (1975)

Cooked up by Bob Baker and Dave Martin, who were often to be found as writers on *Doctor Who*, this beautifully odd little fantasy gem focused on a blonde-topped and blue-eyed alien, the eponymous (and androgynous) Sky, who crash-lands on Earth and must return to his own time. Filmed in a variety of iconic West Country locations, such as Avebury, Glastonbury and Stonehenge, this SF-infused ecological fable still packs a powerful dramatic punch.



2 THE GEORGIAN HOUSE (1976)

Dan and Abbie are two students who work at a rebuilt Georgian house in Bristol. All seems ordinary until they discover an African wood carving that sends them back in time, where they meet a young black slave, who is the key to getting them back. Only three episodes exist; now out on DVD, courtesy of Network.



3 KING OF THE CASTLE (1977)

"Kafka for kids" is how co-writer Bob Baker described this fizzily inventive fantasy about a teenage boy who, after an accident that should have killed him, is reawoken in an alternative reality, filled with gruesome replicas of the people he knows. Intended as a nightmarish journey into the subconscious anxieties of its teenage protagonist, it's a series rich in weirdness, from the insanely angled camerawork to the hysterical musical score.



4 THE CLIFTON HOUSE MYSTERY (1978)

A supernatural serial set in Bristol, *The Clifton House Mystery's* goings on are the dramatic equal to anything from Alejandro Amenábar or JA Bayona. Set almost entirely within the claustrophobic confines of the Clare family's home, *The Clifton House Mystery* takes full advantage of its studio-bound trappings.



5 INTO THE LABYRINTH (1980)

Into The Labyrinth suffered from an over-reliance of CSO, meaning that while the writing was often good, the presentation was often woefully shabby. Ron Moody played Rothgo, who is continually thwarted in his quest to regain the Nidus through time and space by Balor (Pamela Salem).



wanted to know what happened in the last episode. They'd had to leave the UK before it was aired! He offered to buy us both lunch if we could fill him in. So that's what happened: he gave us an excellent lunch, and we gave him a signed copy of the book!"

Whether *Return To The Stones* ever gets that sequel, or whether the remake ever happens is, naturally, up in the air. Whether there's the trust there now to give a children's television audience such a fruity mix of hard science and ancient pagan faith, is a moot point. "TV was still run by adults, poets, war heroes in those days," says Trevor Ray regretfully. "We were never asked to dumb it down."



Children Of The Stones is out on DVD, available from Network now.



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ET

1. What kind of confectionary is ET most partial to?
2. What does ET's Halloween costume consist of?
3. Which comic strip inspires ET to try to return home?
4. What are ET's final words to Elliot?
5. What does Gertie give to ET as a leaving gift?

ELLIOT

6. Where do Elliot and his family live?
7. What is the name of Elliot's older brother?

8. In which country does Elliot's father live with his new girlfriend?
9. What is Elliot's mother's name?
10. What colour is Elliot's iconic hoody?

EVERYONE ELSE

11. Which John Wayne film briefly features in ET?
12. How old is Elliot's younger sister Gertie?
13. Which planet does Tyler say ET is from?
14. Which is the name of the scientist who wants to study ET?

15. What does Gertie dress up as for Halloween?

REAL LIFE

16. When was ET's initial theatrical release in the United States?
17. Complete the film's tagline: "He is afraid. He is alone..."
18. Which song is playing on the radio at the start of the film?
19. Which composer wrote the film's score?
20. Who wrote the film's script?

DIDN'T HE/SHE DO WELL! See how you did with our arbitrary scoring system



16-20

ET

Well done! You are the greatest! Literally nothing fazes you, whether it's being stranded on a strange planet three million light years from home or taking a gruelling quiz at the back of a magazine.



11-15

ELLIOT

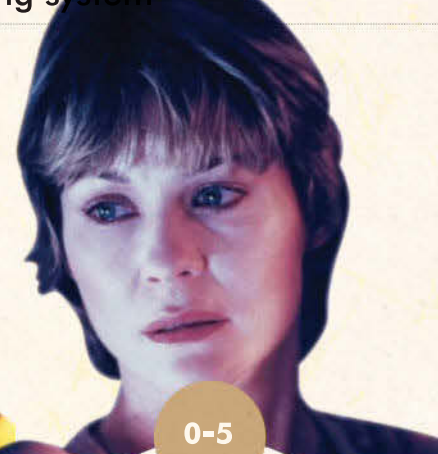
You may not be the biggest kid in the playground, but you're pretty good at quizzes and no one can take that away from you. Look inside yourself: the answers are right here [points to your heart].



6-10

GERTIE

Cute pigtails, sarcastic comments and sly remarks will never disguise the fact that your quiz game is kind of weak. You need to spend time brushing up on your film knowledge before you can be the best.



0-5

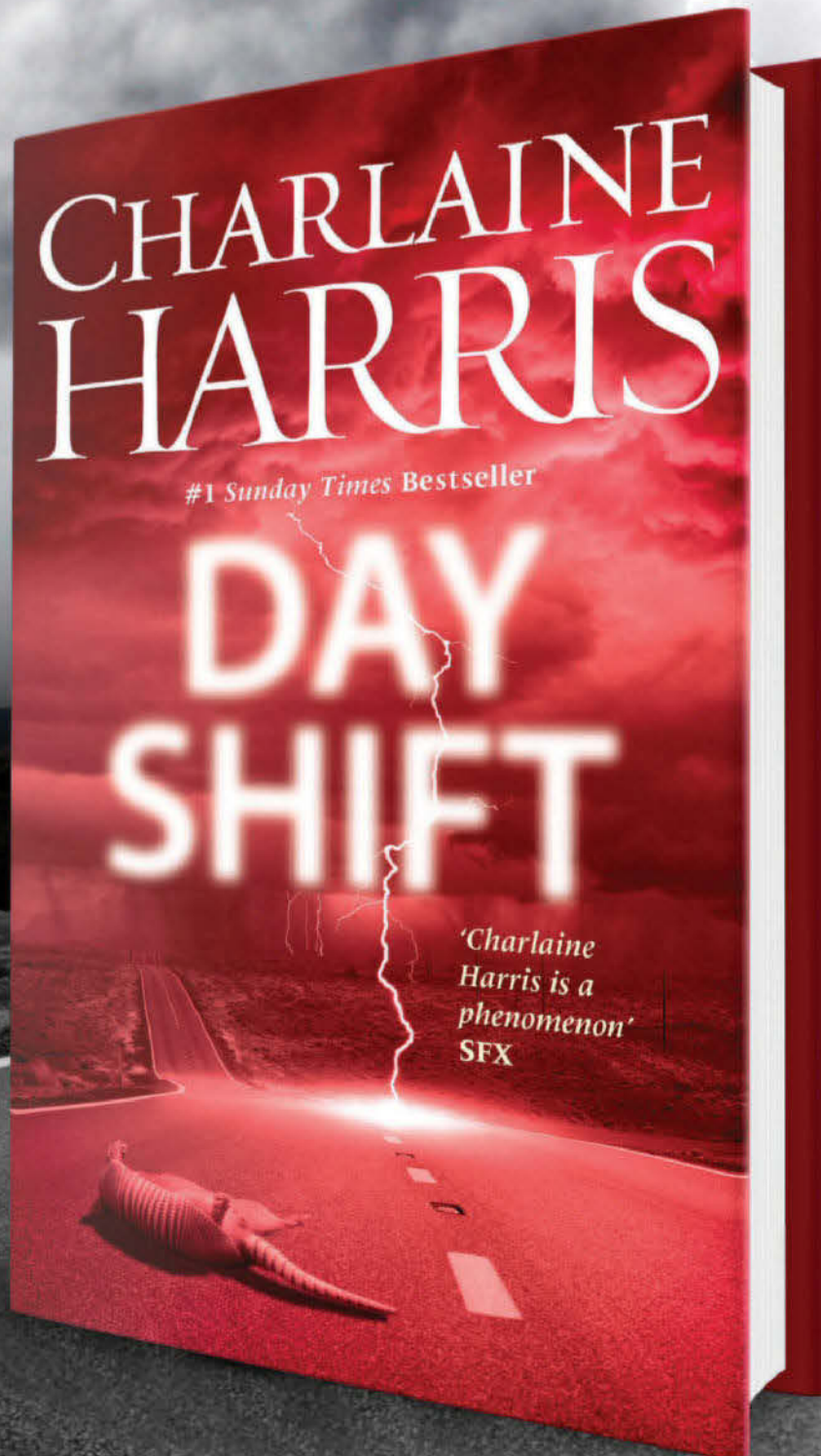
ELLIOT'S MUM

Well, you suck at quizzes, but you've been going through a rough time recently so we'll let you off the hook. Relax, pull yourself together and try again, because there's nothing you can't do if you try.

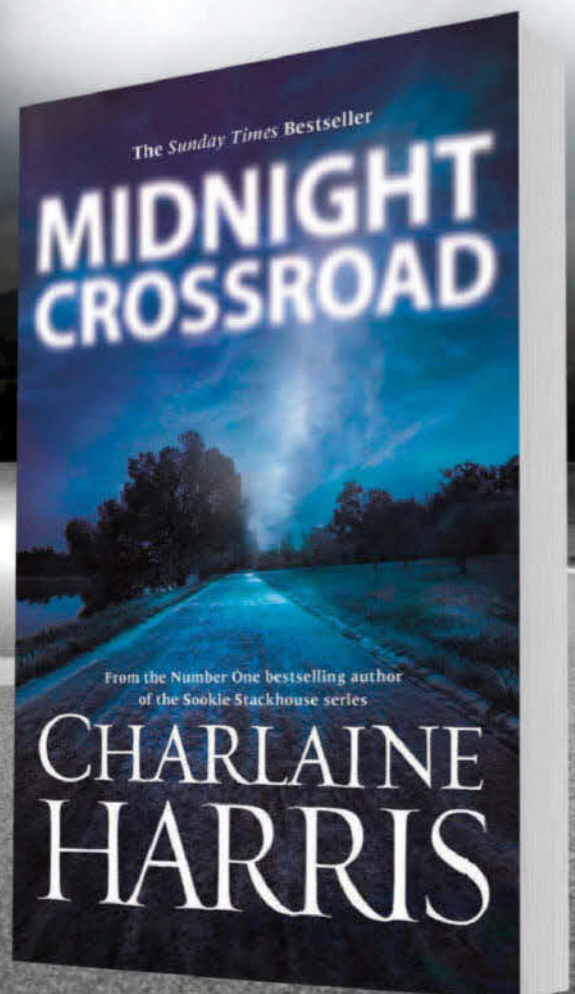
ANSWERS: 1. REESE'S PIECES 2. A SHEET WITH EYEHOLES CUT OUT 3. BUCK ROGERS 4. "I'LL BE RIGHT HERE" 5. THE PLANT 6. LOS ANGELES 7. MICHAEL 8. MEXICO 9. MARY 10. RED 11. THE QUIET MAN 12. FIVE 13. URANUS 14. KEYS 15. A COWGIRL 16. 11 JUNE 1982 17. "...HE IS THREE MILLION LIGHT YEARS FROM HOME" 18. PAPA OOM MOW MOW BY THE BEACH BOYS 19. JOHN WILLIAMS 20. MELISSA MATHISON

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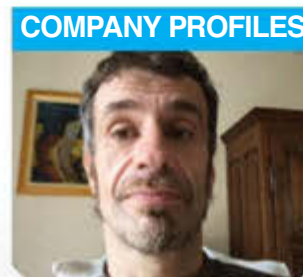
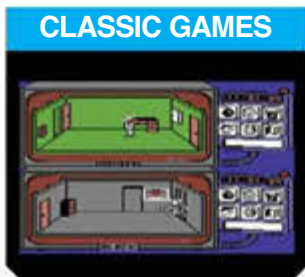


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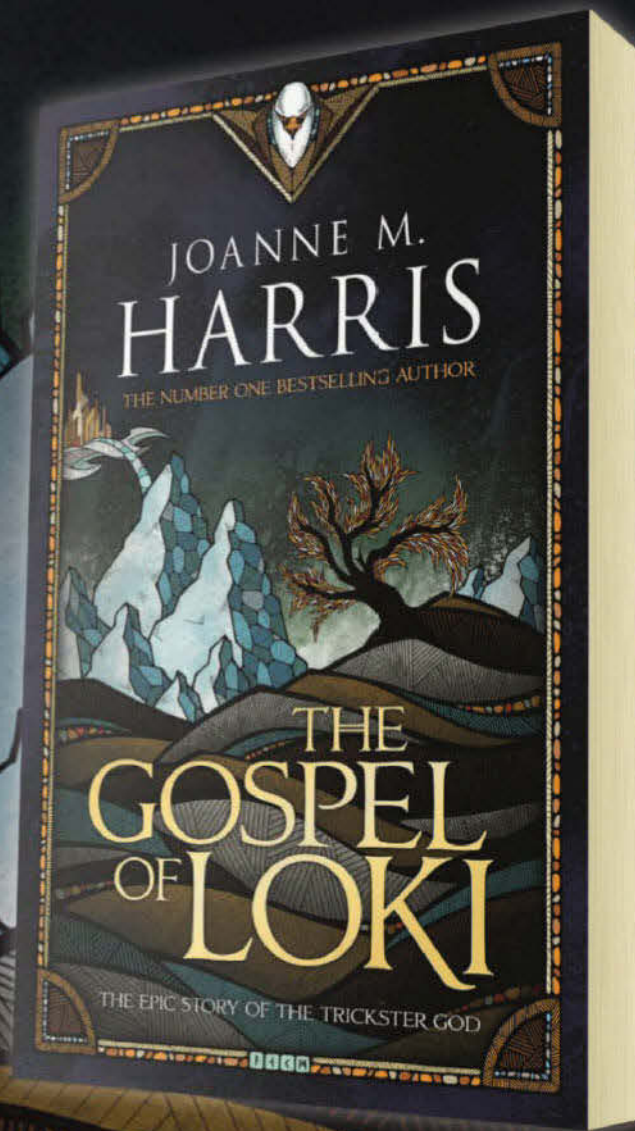
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